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After the Portrait by William Hoare

ENGLISH LITERATURE

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME III

FROM MILTON TO JOHNSON

BY

EDMUND GOSSE

HON. M. A. OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

HON. LL.D. OF ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

PART II

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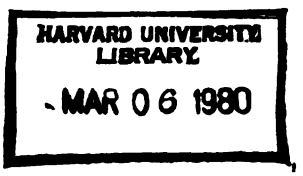


Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719)

Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719) was the son of William Garth, and was born at Bowland Forest, in Yorkshire, in 1661. He was educated at Ingleton, and then at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he stayed from 1676 until he went in 1687 to study medicine at Leyden. He settled in London as a doctor, and took a considerable part, as a Whig, in current politics. Garth published in 1699 a heroic poem called *The Dispensary*, describing with farcical solemnity a controversy between the doctors and the apothecaries on the subject of medical relief for out-patients. This poem enjoyed a very great success. It was Garth who, in 1700, secured dignified burial for Dryden. He was one of the early members of the Kit-Cat Club, and wrote the verses which were engraved on its toasting-glasses. Of his other not very numerous productions, the topographical poem of *Claremont* (1715) deserves notice. Garth became a very rich man; he died after a short illness, on the 18th of January 1719. He was buried at Harrow. Pope said that "his death was very heroical, and yet unaffected enough to have made a saint or a philosopher famous."

Sir Samuel Garth
After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

Anne Finch (1660–1720)

Anne Finch, Countess of **Winchelsea** (1660–1720), was the daughter of a Hampshire baronet. She became maid of honour to the Duchess of York, Mary of Modena, and at Court she met Heneage Finch, who was the Duke's gentleman of the bedchamber. They married in 1685, and when the flight of James II. took place, they withdrew to Eastwell Park. They lived here together in retirement for the rest of their lives. In 1712, through the death of a nephew, Finch became fourth Earl of Winchelsea. In 1713 the Countess published her *Miscellany Poems*, the occasional writings of thirty years. At Eastwell, Lady Winchelsea studied the phenomena of nature more closely than any of her contemporaries; in the contemplation of the physical world she sought and found relief from a constitutional melancholia, which greatly depressed her spirits. In her park there was a hill, called Parnassus, to which she was particularly partial, and here she wrote many of her poems. She and her husband—they called themselves "Daphnis" and "Ardelia"—lived in great contentment together in their country home until 1720, when the Countess died. The Earl survived until 1726. Lady Winchelsea's poems were first collected in 1902.

FROM LADY WINCHELSEA'S "NOCTURNAL REVERIE."

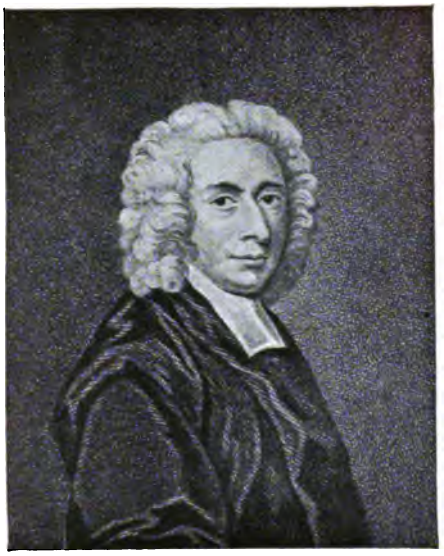
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly view the heaven's mysterious face;
When, in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence spring the woodbind and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the fox-glove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
Where scattered glow-worms—but in twilight fine—
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine;
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charm and perfect beauty bright; . . .
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
While nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant Man doth sleep.

In this dead period Philips and Watts seemed poets, and were undoubtedly men of individual talent. **John Philips** (1676–1709), was born at Bampton on the 30th of December 1676. He made a special study of the versification of Milton, and published, imperfectly in 1701, completely in 1703, *The Splendid Shilling*, an admirable study in parody of the blank verse of his master. His other works were serious—*Blenheim* in 1705 and *Cider* in 1708, the latter being the earliest and one of the best of the closely-observed, semi-didactic, semi-descriptive poems for which the eighteenth century was later on to be conspicuous. Philips, whose constitution was consumptive and asthmatical, died prematurely on the 15th of February 1709. He lacked no honour, being buried in Hereford Cathedral, with a monument, the inscription on which was composed by Atterbury, in Westminster Abbey.

John Philips
After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Knellier

Less of a poet than Philips, **Isaac Watts** (1674–1748), "a man who never wrote but for a good purpose," is far better known to the public. He was born at Southampton on the 17th of July 1674,

and was precocious from his infancy. His father was a Dissenter, and Isaac, though tempted to go to Oxford, chose to take his lot with his own people. His famous hymns originally appeared as *Horæ Lyricæ* in 1705; his no less famous *Psalms of David* in 1719. In prose he published a treatise on *Logic* and another on *The Improvement of the Mind.* In opening the doors of easy and graceful literature to the lower middle-class public the services of Watts were inestimable, and his name, although certain associations with it may provoke a smile, should always be mentioned with honour in connection with the popularisation of English letters. The laborious and useful life of Isaac Watts closed on the 25th of November 1748. Twenty years earlier he had been made a D.D. by the universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.



Isaac Watts

From an original Portrait

John Dennis (1657–1734)

John Dennis (1657–1734) was the son of a wealthy London saddler, who sent him to school at Harrow, and in 1675 to Caius College, Cambridge. He took his bachelor's degree, but was dismissed from the university before he had proceeded to his master's degree, for stabbing a fellow-graduate, in March 1680. He spent several years in France and Italy. In 1691 his first poem was published, an Ode to the King. His *Miscellanies*, in 1693, opened to Dennis the world of letters, and he became intimate with Wycherley, Dryden, and the youthful Congreve. The violence of his temper and his want of practical judgment were always bringing him into difficulties. In 1696 he first came forward in his proper capacity, as a critic of poetry, and for some time after the death of Dryden, Dennis was incontestably the best judge of literature living in England. In 1702 he lost his private fortune, but, on Lord Halifax's advice, managed to save enough to buy himself a small annuity. His position in society, however, was gone, and his work soon began to show an acerbity and peevishness which were doubtless the results of misfortune. He made mistake upon mistake, and his crowning error of judgment was his attempt to browbeat Pope, in the flush of his youthful success. For this he was punished with the deathless satire on

John Dennis

From Van der Gucht's Engraving

"tremendous Appius," a reference to a tragedy of *Appius and Virginia* that Dennis had brought out in 1709. He entered into a disastrous controversy with Pope, in which he was led to call that poet "a hunch-backed toad" who was ready "to fasten his teeth and claws" into any one who attacked him. Dennis went on to attack Addison also, and in fact degenerated into a common scold. He outlived his annuity as well as his reputation, and died in poverty, on the 6th of January 1734, soon after a benefit performance; for this Pope had written a prologue, in which he had called Dennis, benevolently, "Belisarius old and blind," and the hatchet had at last been buried.

It is not to be supposed that critics of the prestige of Dennis or Rymer would address the public from a less dignified stage than that of a book, or, at worst, a sixpenny pamphlet. But at the close of the reign of William III. we meet with the earliest apparition of literary criticism in periodical publications. In other words, the newspaper was now beginning to take literary form, and the introduction of such a factor must not be left unmentioned here. The first reviews printed in an English newspaper were those appended by Dunton to *The Athenian Gazette* in 1691; but these were not original, they were simply translated out of the *Journal des Savans*. Notices of books, in the modern sense, began to be introduced very timidly into some of the news-sheets about the year 1701. Nor was this the only direction in which literary journalism was started; men of real importance began to take part in newspaper-writing, and the English press may name among the earliest of its distinguished servants such personages as Atterbury, Kennet, Hoadley, and Defoe.

JOHN DUNTON, Born 1659 Died 1733.

John Dunton (1659–1733)

John Dunton (1659–1733) was born at Graffham, in Hunts, 4th May 1659. He was the son of a clergyman of the same name. His mother died before he was a year old, and his father threw up his living and went to Ireland. At the age of fourteen the son was apprenticed to a London bookseller. About 1680 Dunton set up in business as a printer and bookseller on his own account, and for the first five years was very successful. At the outburst of Monmouth's rebellion he went for a year to America, and then wandered on the Continent, not returning to London until the end of 1688. He says that in the course of his life he published six hundred books, and repented of only seven of them. Of his various speculative projects, one,

The Athenian Gazette or *Mercury*, was remarkable. In 1705 he published an odd but curious and even valuable autobiography, called *Life and Errors of John Dunton*. He fell into poverty, and died, perhaps at St. Albans, about 1733. Dunton has been looked upon as the founder of the "higher journalism" in England. Some of his books have sensational titles, such as *A Cat may look at a Queen*, and *The Pulpit Lunatics*.

Francis Atterbury (1662–1731)

Francis Atterbury (1662–1731) was born at Milton Keynes, in Bucks, on the 6th of March 1662. He was educated at Westminster, and at Christ Church College, Oxford. His first publication was a Latin version of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1682). Atterbury stayed long at the university, until indeed he complained of his "hard luck to be pinned down to it." He was over thirty when he took orders, and became one of the chaplains to William and Mary. All this time Atterbury was actively engaged in controversy. In 1700 he was made Archdeacon of Totnes, and in 1704 Dean of Carlisle; in grabbing at the latter post he displayed an unseemly haste, which endangered his reputation. His promotion, however, continued without abatement, and in 1712 he became Dean of Christ Church, again with circumstances of "imperious and despotic temper," which caused him to be greatly disliked. He made Oxford, indeed, too hot to hold him, and "'twas thought advisable to move him" to be Bishop of Rochester in 1713. He aimed at the Primacy, but Queen Anne's death struck a fatal blow at his hopes. George I. had a personal dislike to Atterbury, and made no scruple of showing it. Atterbury grew more and more disaffected to the Government, and in 1722 was thrown into the Tower, charged with high treason. His trial before the House of Lords, in May 1723, was a very famous affair, and caused universal emotion in the country. Atterbury was found guilty by his peers, and was sentenced by the King to perpetual banishment. He passed to Brussels, and then to Paris, where he gave himself, save for his work in the service of the Pretender, entirely to

Francis Atterbury

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

literature, and died on the 15th of February 1731. Atterbury was a man of commanding character and great activity of mind, but by nature devoted to intrigue, and the victim of violent political passion.

While, therefore, we cannot claim for the opening years of the century the production of any masterpieces, and while its appearance, from an intellectual point of view, is to us quiescent, yet without doubt the seeds of genius were swelling in the darkness. In all departments of thought and art, Englishmen were throwing off the last rags of the worn-out garments of the Renaissance, and were accustoming themselves to wear with comfort their new suit of classical formulas. In poetry, philosophy, history, religion, the age was learning the great lesson that the imagination was no longer to be a law unto itself, but was to follow closely a code dictated by reason and the tradition of the ancients. Enthusiasm was condemned as an irregularity, the daring use of imagery as an error against manners. The divines were careful to restrain their raptures, and to talk and write like lawyers. Philosophical writers gladly modelled themselves on Hobbes and Locke, the nakedness of whose unenthusiastic style was eminently sympathetic to them, although they conceived a greater elegance of delivery necessary. Their speculations became mainly ethical, and the elements of mystery and romance almost entirely died out. Neither the pursuit of pleasure nor the assuaging of conscience, no active force of any kind, became supreme with the larger class of readers; but the new bourgeois rank of educated persons, which the age of Queen Anne created, occupied itself in a passive analysis of human nature. It loved to sit still and watch the world go by; an appetite for realistic description, bounded by a decent code, and slipping neither up into enthusiasm nor down into scepticism, became the ruling passion of the age. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries common-sense had been by no means characteristic of the English race, which had struggled, flaunted, or aspired. It now went back to something like its earlier serenity, and in an age of comparatively feeble emotion and slight intensity took things as they were. In Shaftesbury, a writer of provisional but extraordinary influence, we see this common-sense taking the form of a mild and exuberant optimism; and perhaps what makes the dark figure of Swift stand out so vividly against the rose-grey background of the age is the incongruity of his violence and misanthropy in a world so easy-going.

In chronological sequence, it should, perhaps, be the theology of the early part of the reign of Anne which should first attract us, but it need not detain us long. The golden age of Anglican theology had long passed away, and in the progress of latitudinarianism, culminating, through Locke, in the pronounced deists, literature as an art has little interest. A tolerant rationalism was not likely to encourage brilliant writing, the orthodox churchmen wrote like wrangling lawyers, and the non-jurors and dissenters, who produced some vigorous scholars later on, were now as dreary as their opponents. Of the early deists, Shaftesbury alone was a man of style, and him we shall presently meet with in another capacity. Among the theologians, the most

eminent writer was SAMUEL CLARKE, "the greatest English representative of the *a priori* method of constructing a system of theology." His once famous collection of *Boyle Lectures* long seemed a classic to admiring readers, and still affects our conventional notions of theology. Clarke, however, has few readers to-day, and his manner of statement, which resembles that of a mathematician propounding a theorem, is as tedious to us now as it was fascinating to the group of young controversialists who clustered round Clarke during his brief career at Cambridge. In the hands of Clarke and his school, theological writing followed the lines laid down for it by Tillotson, but with a greatly accentuated aridity and neatness. In the search for symmetry these authors neglected almost every other excellence and ornament of literary expression.

Samuel Clarke (1675–1729)

Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) was the son of an alderman and M.P. of Norwich, where he was born on the 11th of October 1675. He showed much precocity, and after being well grounded at the Norwich grammar-school, proceeded in 1691 to Caius College, Cambridge. He was one of the earliest to perceive the value of the "sublime discoveries" of Sir Isaac Newton, and he greatly contributed, at a very early age, to the establishment of the Newtonian philosophy. His original bent was for mathematics, but about 1696 he turned his attention to Hebrew, and determined to become a divine. He took holy orders, and in 1698 became chaplain to John Moore, Bishop of Norwich, in whose palace he mainly resided for nearly twelve years. Here he enjoyed every advantage for literary work, and the list of his numerous publications opens with the *Three Practical Essays* of 1699. His Boyle Lectures *On the Being and Attributes of God*, and *The Evidences of Religion*, were published in 1705 and 1706, and produced a great impression on contemporary thought. On the recommendation of the Bishop of Norwich, Queen Anne made Clarke one of her chaplains-in-ordinary, and gave him in 1709

Samuel Clarke

After the Portrait by John Vanderbank

the important living of St. James's, Westminster. The even tenor of Clarke's life was broken in 1712 by the controversy caused by his volume on the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. This work was accused of heresy, and in 1714 a formal charge against the author was brought before Convocation. From this time forth Clarke lay under a suspicion of heterodoxy, which he took little pains to remove, and his friends were unable to procure him any further promotion in the Church. He seems to have been a freethinker upon many points, although a sincere believer in the basal principles of Christianity. He continued to write much, and not to confine himself to theology. He published the *Optics* of his master Newton (1706), and the first twelve books of the *Iliad* (1729) in Latin versions on which he had expended great care. He collected his *Sermons* in 1724. He was invited to succeed Newton as Master of the Mint, and declined the offer. On the 17th of May 1729 Clarke died, with some suddenness, after preaching before the judges at Serjeant's Inn. He seems to have been an honest, modest, and amiable man, of quiet yet courtly manners, but subject to a certain timidity and reserve in the pushing of his thought to its logical conclusion. He was less a divine than a mathematician, treating theology according to Newtonian formulas.

If philosophy at the opening of the eighteenth century could give a better account of itself than theology could, it was mainly because the leading philosopher was a born writer. The third Earl of SHAFTESBURY has been strangely neglected by the historians of our literature, partly because his scheme of thought has long been rejected, and partly because his style, in which some of the prolixity of the seventeenth century still lingered, was presently obliterated by the technical smartness of Addison and Swift. With the meaning of Shaftesbury's doctrine of virtue, and with the value of his optimism and plea for harmony, we have nothing here to do, but his influence on writing in his own age and down the entire eighteenth century is highly important to us. Commonly as the fact is overlooked, Shaftesbury was one of the literary forces of the time—he was, perhaps, the greatest between Dryden and Swift. He died in 1713, two years after his miscellaneous treatises, written at intervals during the fifteen years preceding, had been published in those handsome volumes of the *Characteristics*. Shaftesbury's long residences in Holland gave him the opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the movement of Continental thought to an extent doubtless beyond any previous writer of English prose. The effect is seen on his style and temper, which are less insular than those of any of the men with whom it is natural to compare him. It is to be noted also that Shaftesbury was the earliest English author whose works in the vernacular were promptly admired abroad, and he deserves remembrance as the first who really broke down the barrier which excluded England from taking her proper place in the civilisation of literary Europe.

The writers who were to shine in prose immediately after the death of Shaftesbury were distinguished for the limpid fluency and grace of their manner. In this Shaftesbury did not resemble them, but rather set an example for the kind of prose which was to mark the central years of the

century. There is nothing about him which reminds us of the nobleman that writes with ease: he is elaborate and self-conscious to the highest degree, embroidered with ornament of dainty phraseology, anxious to secure harmony and yet to surprise the fancy. The style of Shaftesbury glitters and rings, proceeding along in a capricious, almost mincing effort to secure elegance, with a sort of colourless euphuism, which is desultory and a little irritating indeed, yet so curious that one marvels that it should have fallen completely into neglect. He is the father of æstheticism, the first Englishman who developed theories of formal virtue, who attempted to harmonise the beautiful with the true and the good. His delicate, Palladian style, in which a certain external stiffness and frigidity seem to be holding down a spirit eager to express the passion of beauty, is a very interesting feature of the period to which we have now arrived. The modern attitude of mind seems to meet us first in the graceful, cosmopolitan writings of Shaftesbury, and his genius, like a faint perfume, pervades the contemplation of the arts down to our own day. Without a Shaftesbury there would hardly have been a Ruskin or a Pater.

Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671–1713)

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of **Shaftesbury** (1671–1713), was the son of the second Earl and his wife, Lady Dorothy Manners. It is more interesting that he was the grandson of the famous Lord Chancellor, whose brilliant and tragical career came to an end in exile in 1683. The second Earl was a young man of very poor physique and intelligence, "born," as Dryden said, "a shapeless lump, like anarchy." The first Earl, "in concern for his family," commissioned the philosopher, John Locke, to look out for a wife of "good person and constitution" for his only son. This he did, and, being already physician to the Ashley Coopers, not merely helped to bring seven sons and daughters into the world, but arranged everything for their education. The philosopher, in his autobiographical sketch, styles Locke "my friend and foster-father." At the age of three the future philosopher was formally transferred to the guardianship of his grandfather, who placed him with a learned lady, Mrs. Birch, to be grounded in Greek and Latin. He showed a great proficiency in study. When his grandfather died, he was sent, in 1683 (as Lord Ashley), to Winchester; but he was made miserable there by the roughness of boys and masters alike, and in 1686 he was allowed to go abroad, in the charge of a Scotch tutor. He "spent a considerable time in Italy, where he acquired a great knowledge in the Polite Arts." Lord Ashley avoided "the conversation of other young English gentlemen on their travels," and devoted himself with close assiduity to the study of painting, sculpture, and music. He spoke French, and probably Italian also, so fluently and correctly, that his being a foreigner could not be observed. Lord Ashley stayed abroad until he had become a finished connoisseur, and then, in 1689, returned to England, not, however, to engage in public life, but for five years more to devote himself to the study of literature. He "turned the Ancients into sap and blood."

In 1695 he seems to have considered that his intellectual apprenticeship was over, and he turned to practical life. He entered Parliament as member for Poole. When he made his first speech in the House "he could not utter a syllable of what he intended," but contrived to give so adroit a turn to his confusion, that his embarrass-

ment seemed intentional and a happy stroke of acting. After this, as long as his health permitted him to remain in Parliament, Lord Ashley was a power there, although he was hated by his opponents, the "apostate" Whigs, who "gave out that he was too bookish, because not given to play, nor assiduous at Court; that he was no good companion, because not a rake nor a hard drinker; and that he was no man of the world, because not selfish nor open to bribes." He became subject to asthma, and could not endure the fog and smoke of London, which was blown as far as his "little house" at Chelsea. He retired, with his father, to Rotterdam, where he met Bayle and other Frenchmen of light and leading. While he was in Holland, in 1699, his first work, the *Inquiry after Virtue*, was surreptitiously printed in England. After an absence of a year in Holland, Lord Shaftesbury died, and the philosopher succeeded as third Earl. He returned, and took a considerable part in politics, until the accession of Queen Anne, when the Whigs fell into disgrace. It was high time, for Shaftesbury's delicate health was again "mightily impaired by fatigues in the public affairs." He settled once more in Rotterdam, and stayed there, living very quietly, and devoting himself entirely to literature, until August 1704. He was now so much stronger that he ventured back to England, but after this time he very rarely attended the House of Lords. The improvement in his health was very provisional, and he soon became a confirmed invalid.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, second Earl of Shaftesbury

From the Portrait by Closterman in the "Characteristics"

From this time forth his leisure was almost entirely occupied in collecting material for and in writing his great book. He was urged to marry, as his only brother, Maurice, did not seem to have any intention of taking a wife. Shaftesbury was not unwilling to be persuaded, and, as Locke had selected a partner for his father, so Molesworth was deputed to find one for him. Meanwhile, his thoughts being directed to the tender passion, Shaftesbury fell in love, on his own account, with the unnamed "daughter of an old lord." It would have been a perfect match, except that the lady's fortune was too large, and Shaftesbury could not brook the charge of marrying for money. This was early in 1709, and six months afterwards a young lady was discovered, poor enough to satisfy the philosopher's fastidious conscience, a Miss Jane Ewer of Herefordshire. We hear nothing of her beauty, but she was well educated, and she possessed "the plain qualities of a good mother and a good nurse." They

were married late in 1709, and on the 9th of February 1711 their heir and only child, afterwards the fourth Earl, was born at Reigate. Fragments of Shaftesbury's great work had, by this time, been published, the *Letter concerning Enthusiasm* in 1708, *The Moralists* in 1709, *Advice to an Author* in 1710, all anonymously. In 1711, at length, he produced the complete work on which he had for so many years been engaged, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, in three handsome and costly volumes, with engravings after his own designs; the letters A. A. C., at the close of the preface, gave an indication of authorship.

The health of Shaftesbury could now no longer endure the climate of England, and in July 1711, in spite of the disturbed state of Europe, he determined to move to Italy. The Duke of Berwick very politely conducted him through his army on the borders of Piedmont, and Shaftesbury reached Naples in November. He seems to have felt extremely ill on his arrival, but he was still able to write and to enjoy the conversation of the *virtuosi* of Naples. His treatises on *The Judgment of Hercules* and on *Design* were composed at this time. A young Pole, called Crell, who acted as his secretary, has recorded that his increasing weakness and his despondency about public affairs in England did not interfere with Shaftesbury's "perfect cheerfulness and sweetness of temper." The fourth Earl, who wrote long afterwards a charming sketch of his father, attributes the surprising prolongation of Shaftesbury's life to "the excellence of the air of Italy and the uncommon care of my mother." He died at last, at Naples, on the 4th of February 1713. Shaftesbury, if universal report may be accepted, was one of the most gracious and lovable men who ever lived. His gentleness, his hospitality, his courage in the face of prolonged and hopeless ill-health, his gaiety and good humour, his absolute rectitude of conduct, public and private, were notorious, and even his political opponents suggest nothing against his character. "No philosopher," says the President of Corpus, "has ever attempted to show forth his philosophy in his life more completely than Shaftesbury."

Two paragraphs may give a slight indication of the style in which the *Characteristics* is written :—

> Nor is the enjoyment of a single beauty sufficient to satisfy such an aspiring soul. It seeks how to combine more beauties, and by what coalition of these to form a beautiful society. It views communities, friendships, relations, duties ; and considers by what harmony of particular minds the general harmony is composed, and commonweal established. Nor satisfied even with public good in one community of men, it frames itself a nobler object, and with enlarged affection seeks the good of mankind. It dwells with pleasure amidst that reason and those orders on which this fair correspondence and goodly interest is established. Laws, constitutions, civil and religious rites ; whatever civilises or polishes rude mankind ; the sciences and arts, philosophy, morals, virtue ; the flourishing state of human affairs, and the perfection of human nature—these are the delightful prospects, and this the charm of beauty which attracts it.
>
> Still ardent in this pursuit—such as its love of order and perfection—it rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection, wishing the best, hoping still to find a just and wise administration. And since all hope of this were vain and idle, if no Universal Mind presided ; since, without such a supreme intelligence and providential care, the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities, 'tis here the generous mind labours to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things, and the universal order happily sustained.

It is quite certain that the brilliant school of poets who began to make their appearance just as Shaftesbury was dying, owed to him the optimism of their religious and philosophical system. But it was mainly to the French that they were indebted for the impetus which started them; and if France had already made a deep mark on our literature between 1660 and 1674, it made another, not less indelible, in 1710. What the influence of Rapin, thirty-five years before, had done to regulate taste in England, and to enforce the rules laid down by the ancients, had not proved stimulating to poetic genius, and, with the death of Dryden, we have seen that poetry practically ceased to exist in England. When it returned it was mainly in consequence of the study of another Frenchman, but this time of a poet, Boileau, whose influence on the mind of Pope, carefully concealed by the latter, was really far greater than any critic has ventured to confess. There were certain qualities in Boileau which can but have appealed directly to the young Pope, who in 1710 was twenty-two years of age. Boileau had not been so closely wedded to pedantic rules as his friends the Jesuit critics were. He had insisted on inspiration, on the value of ceaseless variety, on obedience to the laws of language. The preface to the 1701 edition of his works is one of the landmarks of European criticism, and we can scarcely doubt that it awakened a high spirit of emulation in the youthful Pope. In it Boileau had urged that none should ever be presented to the public in verse but true thoughts and just expressions. He had declaimed against frigidity of conceit and tawdry extravagance, and had proclaimed the virtues of simplicity without carelessness, sublimity without presumption, a pleasing air without *fard*. He had boldly convicted his predecessors of bad taste, and had called his lax contemporaries to account. He had blamed the sterile abundance of an earlier period, and the uniformity of dull writers. Such principles were more than all others likely to commend themselves to Pope, and his practice shows us that they did.

We cannot think of the poetry of the age of Anne and not of ALEXANDER POPE. As little ought we to analyse Pope and fail to admit what he owes to Boileau. The "Law-giver of Parnassus" gave laws, it is certain, to the hermit of Windsor Forest. The work of no other great English writer has coincided with that of a foreigner so closely as Pope's does with that of Boileau. The French satirist had recommended polish, and no one practised it more thoroughly than Pope did. Boileau discouraged love-poetry, and Pope did not seriously attempt it. Boileau paraphrased Horace, and in so doing formulated his own poetical code in *L'Art Poétique;* Pope did the same in the *Essay on Criticism.* Boileau specially urged the imitation of Homer on young poets, and Pope presently devoted himself to the *Iliad.* In *Le Lutrin* Boileau had written the best mock-heroic, till Pope, in closely analogous form, surpassed him in the *Rape of the Lock.* The *Satires* of Pope would not have been written but for those of his French predecessor; and even Pope's *Elegy* and *Eloisa*

can be accounted for in the precepts of Boileau. The parallel goes very far indeed : it is the French poet first, and not the English one, who insists that the shepherds of pastoral must not speak as they do in a country village. Pope's very epitaphs recall Boileau's labours with the inscriptions of the Petite Académie. That purity and decency of phrase which the school of Pope so beneficially introduced into the coarse field of English literature had been strenuously urged on Frenchmen by Boileau. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that it is not so much to Dryden, whose influence on Pope has certainly been exaggerated, as to the author of *Le Lutrin*, that the poetry of the age of Anne owed its general impulse, and its greatest poet the general tendency of almost every branch of his production. It is true that Pope told Spence that "I learned versification wholly from Dryden's works," his prosody being a continuation and development of that of Dryden ; but in the use to which he put his verse, it was certainly the great Frenchman (who died two months before Pope's earliest important poem was published) that was his master. Walsh had told him, in 1706, that "the best of the modern poets in all languages are those that have the nearest copied the ancients"; but we may not doubt that it was through Boileau that Pope arrived at a comprehension of Horace, and so of Aristotle.

Alexander Pope and Martha Blount

After the Picture by Charles Jervas

For more than thirty years Pope was so completely the centre of poetical attention in England that he may almost be said to have comprised the poetry of his time. There is no second instance of an English poet preserving for so long a period a supremacy comparable to his. It is possible to defend the position that one or two other versemen of the age did some particular thing better than Pope, though even this requires argument ; but it is quite certain that he alone excelled over a wide range of subjects. The

fact of Pope's poetical ubiquity, however, is rendered much less miraculous by the consideration that if he triumphed over the entire field, the area of that field was extremely restricted. There was never a period, from the Middle Ages till to-day, when the practice of verse was limited to so few forms as it was under the reign of Pope. Lyrical writing, save in the mildest and most artificial species, was not cultivated ; there was no poetical drama, tragic or comic ; there was no description of nature, save the merest convention ; there was scarcely any love-poetry ; no devotional verse of any importance; no epic or elegy or ode that deserved the name. Poetry existed, practically, in but three forms — the critical or satirical, the narrative or didactic, and the occasional — these three, indeed, being so closely correlated that it is not always very easy to distinguish them.

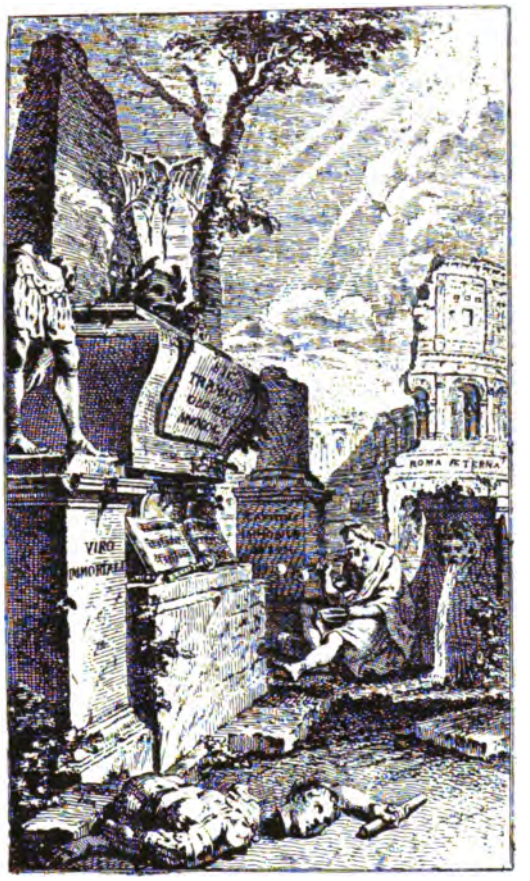
Mrs. Pope (the Poet's Mother)

From an original Drawing by Jonathan Richardson, formerly at Strawberry Hill

It was Pope's aim to redeem verse from unholy uses, to present to the reader none but true thoughts and noble expressions, and to dedicate the gravest form to the highest purpose. His actual practice was not at first so exalted. The boyish *Pastorals* scarcely call for notice ; but in the *Essay on Criticism* he achieved at twenty-one a work of rare grace and authority. He began where other poets have left off, and it is not a little characteristic of Pope's temperament that he should not open with strong, irregular verse, and push on to the comparative stagnation of the critical attitude, but should make this latter the basis of his life-work. The *Essay* is in most respects inferior to its French prototype, more hastily and irregularly composed, and with far less ripeness of judgment; but it is graceful and eloquent, and for the eighteenth century it provided an almost unchallenged code of taste. MATTHEW PRIOR in the same year, though more than twice the age of Pope, ventured upon the earliest publication of his poems, bringing from the close

of the seventeenth century a certain richness of style which we find not in the younger man. His ballads and songs, with their ineffable gaiety, his satires and epigrams, so lightly turned, enriched the meagre body of English verse with a gift, much of which should really be attributed to the age of Dryden. But Prior was not less closely related to the generation of Pope in his Horatian attitude and his brilliant Gallic grace. He was, however, but an occasional trifler with his charming muse, and had none of the younger master's undeviating ambition.

From 1711, to follow the career of Pope is to take part in a triumph in which the best of his contemporaries secures but a secondary part. The *Rape of the Lock* lifted Pope at once to the first rank of living European poets. In lightness of handling, in elegance of badinage, in exquisite amenity of style—that is to say, in the very qualities which Latin Europe had hitherto, and not without justice, denied us—the little British barbarian surpassed all foreign competitors. This is the turning-point of English subserviency to French taste. Pope and his school had closely studied their Boileau, and had learned their lesson well, so well that for the future England is no longer the ape of the French, but is competent, more and more confidently as the century descends, to give examples to the polite world.



Title-page to the "Essay on Man," designed by Pope

A few years later all the countries of Europe were taking these examples, and the imitation of Pope grew to be the rage from Sweden to Italy. Meanwhile, the youth of four-and-twenty was gaining mastery in his art. The *Messiah* reached a pitch of polished, resonant rhetoric hitherto undreamed of, and was a "copy of verses" which became the model and the despair of five generations of poets. Each of these productions stamped more definitely the type of "classical" versification, tone, and character, and all Pope had now to do was to enlarge his knowledge of human nature,

and to cultivate that extreme delicacy of phrase and rapidity of intellectual movement which were his central peculiarities.

He had early learned to master the art of poetry; but although he was already famous, none of those works in which he was to concentrate and illustrate the whole thought and fashion of his age were yet written. Pope was far more than the most skilful of versifiers: he was the microcosm of the reign of George I. There is scarcely a belief, a tradition, an ideal of that age which is not to be discovered lucidly set down in the poems of Pope, who was not vastly above his epoch, as some great poetical prophets have been, but exactly on a level with it, and from our distance its perfect mirror. But before he took up this work of his advanced years he gave the remainder of his youth to a task of high and fertile discipline. From 1713, when Swift

Alexander Pope

From Original Drawings by Jonathan Richardson at Windsor Castle

was going about begging subscriptions for "the best poet in England, Mr. Pope, a Papist," till 1725, when the *Odyssey* appeared, he was mainly occupied in translating from the Greek, or in revising the translations of others. His individuality was so strong, or his realisation of Hellenic art so imperfect, that he conceived a Homer of his own, a Homer polished and restrained to polite uses, no longer an epic poet, but a *conteur* of the finest modern order, fluent, manly, and distinguished, yet essentially a writer of Pope's own day and generation. The old complaints of Pope's *Homer* are singularly futile. It was not an archaistic or a romantic version that England and her subscribers wanted; they desired a fine, scholarly piece in the taste of their own times, and that was exactly what Pope was competent to give them.

But if they were the gainers by his twelve years' labour, so was he. The close study of the Homeric diction gave firmness and ease to his style, concentrated his powers, determined his selection of poetic material. What

Pope wrote during the Homeric period was not considerable in extent, but it included his only incursions into the province of love, the beautiful *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and the *Eloisa to Abelard.* These years, however, marked the solidification of the school of which he was the acknowledged leader, even though some of its members seemed his enemies. Addison, his great rival, had published in 1713 his tragedy of *Cato,* in which the rules of Horace were applied with stringent exactitude, the result being of an exquisite frigidity. In the same year Gay came forward, a skilful and fairly independent satellite of Pope; between 1713 and 1726 contributing a copious and sprightly flow of short pastorals, songs, and epistles. The elegant Archdeacon of Clogher, too, Thomas Parnell, wrote with gravity and wit under the direct stimulus of Pope's friendship. He died in 1718, and the posthumous collection which his master issued four years later contained some harmonious odes and narratives which have not quite disappeared from living English literature. Tickell, who loved Addison and hated Pope, was writing, between 1719 and 1722, poems which owed more to Pope than to Addison, and in particular an elegy on the great essayist which is one of the most dignified funeral pieces in the language. Prior, who died in 1721, had finally collected his writings in 1718, and Swift ever and anon put forth an erratic fragment of vivid caustic verse. All this record of poetical activity dates from those years during which Pope was buried in Homer, but through it all his own claim to the highest place was scarcely questioned, although he was the youngest of the group.

"A Perspective View of Mr. Pope's Grotto"
From a Drawing by J. Serle

Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

Alexander Pope (1688–1744) was the son of Alexander Pope, a Catholic linen-merchant of the city of London, and of his wife, Edith Turner, whose only child he was; his father, who had married before, had a daughter much older than the poet. Alexander Pope was born, on the 21st of May 1688, in Lombard Street. His early childhood was spent at Binfield, near Windsor, to which village his father had retired, as is believed, on account of the harassing legislation which forbade Papists to live within ten miles of London. The child inherited a tendency to nervous headache from his mother, and a deformity of shape from his father; both parents were approaching fifty when he was born. He was a very amiable and charming child,

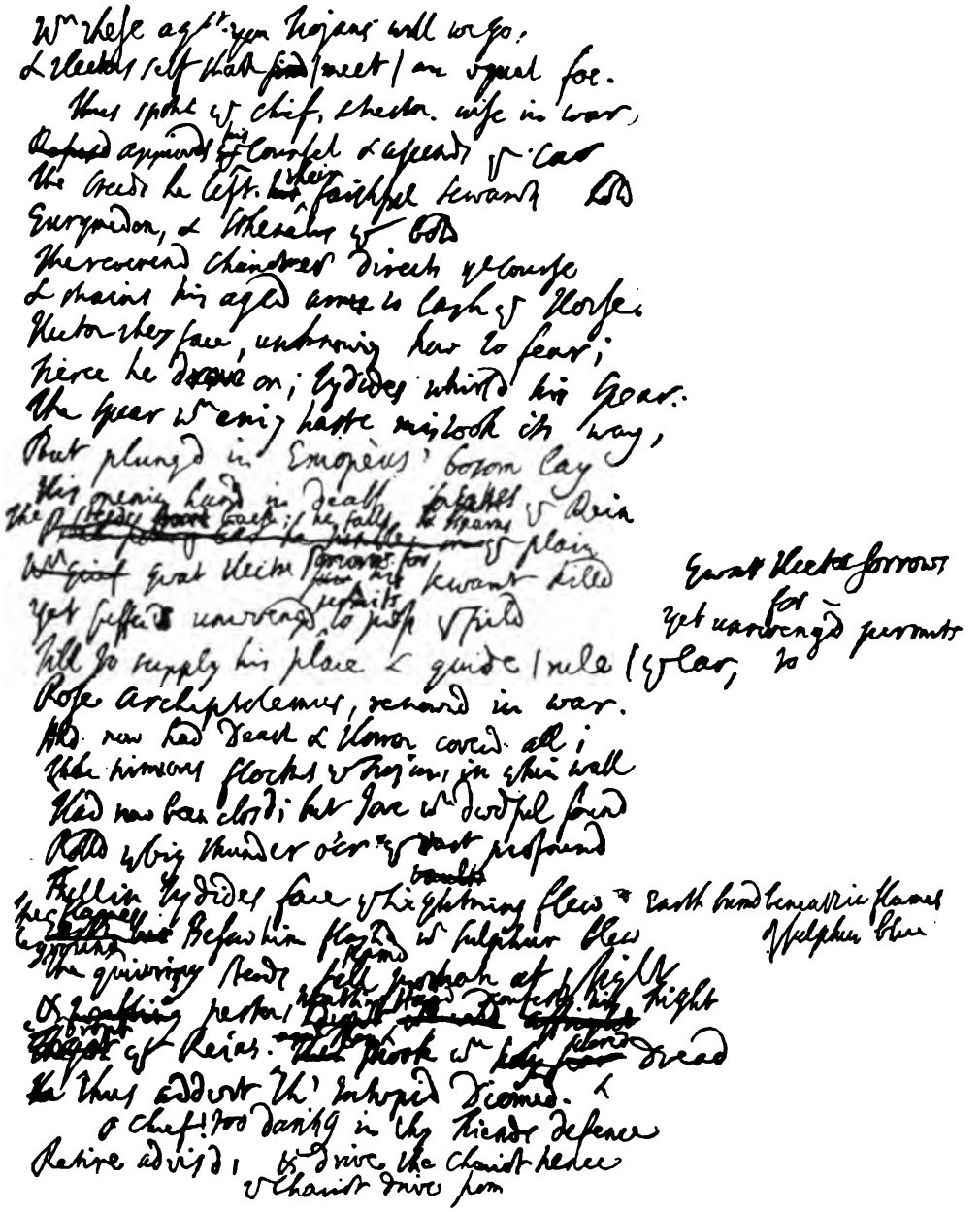
and from the sweetness of his voice was called "the little nightingale." Perhaps because he was a Catholic, perhaps because his health was poor, he received no regular education, though he had been at school at Twyford, near Winchester, and in London before, in 1700, he settled down eagerly to study at home, apparently without guidance, for five years. At seventeen he had so far overtaxed his strength, that he was obliged to give up reading altogether. His work must all this time have been desultory and partial, but he says that he read through "Homer, and some of the greater Greek poets in the original." Quite early, too, he began to write verses; "I lisped in numbers," he says, "for the numbers came." Before he was fifteen, he wrote an epic poem, *Aleander, Prince of Rhodes*, which he afterwards destroyed. All other professions being closed to him by law, Pope early thought of literature as a means of gaining a livelihood, although his father's

A View of Pope's Villa at Twickenham

From Rysbrach's Engraving

slender fortune gave him no present anxiety. He made influential friends, the Blounts of Mapledurham, Sir W. Trumbull, Walsh (who suggested to him a close study of versification), Henry Cromwell (who corresponded with him), the veteran poet Wycherley (who submitted his senile effusions to the boy's correction). The relations with the last-mentioned occupied 1706 and 1707, when Pope was in his nineteenth year, and continued less intimately until 1710, when they were closed by a quarrel which differences of age and temper made inevitable. In 1709 Pope began to be known as a poet by his *Pastorals*, and during the next six years his fame rose with a regularity and a speed scarcely to be matched elsewhere in the history of literature. In 1711 he published his earliest important poem, the *Essay in Criticism*, and in 1712 Lintot printed in his *Miscellany* the first draft of the *Rape of the Lock*, which made a great sensation. Always anxious to aim at perfection, and undistracted by Addison's indulgent praise, Pope rewrote this poem,

adding a "machinery" of gnomes and sylphs, with other adornments. In this form he published it, vastly improved, in 1714. Meanwhile, he had contributed to



Facsimile Page of the MS. of Pope's "Homer"

the *Spectator* his *Messiah* in 1712, and had published *Windsor Forest* in 1713; he had engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with Dennis, much the most formidable critic of the age, and had pulverised him; he had found himself strong enough to

flout Addison and his powerful clique, and he had formed an alliance with Swift. In short, although the actual amount of his published writings was small, the quality of them was so extraordinary that at the age of twenty-six Pope was, without question, the most eminent man of letters in England, where letters had enjoyed so brilliant a revival. Meanwhile, he had begun to prepare his great metrical translation of Homer, a work which had been suggested to him, when he was still a boy, by Sir W. Trumbull. He had been receiving subscriptions for it for several months, when, soon after the death of Queen Anne, he discovered, to his exceeding wrath, that Addison had been urging Tickell to put forward a rival version. As a matter of fact Tickell's *First Iliad* and Pope's earliest instalment appeared simultaneously in June 1715. The inferiority of the former was so obvious that it greatly helped Pope, who, as Doctor Johnson said, "was meditating a criticism upon Tickell, when his adversary sank before him without a blow." Pope was none the less excessively incensed, and it is probable (though not certain) that it was at this time that he wrote the celebrated attack on Addison as Atticus, which was first published—and then not openly by Pope himself—in 1723. In November 1713, to return to Homer, Swift was informing polite society that "the best poet in England was Mr. Pope, a Papist," and was making everybody subscribe.

Alexander Pope
From a Portrait in the possession of Lord Leconfield at Petworth

From this time forward the anxiety to see the new version was intense, and the publication of the first of its six volumes a public event. The issue of the whole of Homer occupied eleven years (1715–1726), and Pope received nearly £9000, much of which he was able to invest, and so, "thanks to Homer, could live and thrive, indebted to no prince or peer alive." This work, although a translation or rather a paraphrase, awakened universal admiration, and may be styled the most important single work in *belles lettres* produced in the Age of Anne. Its effect upon taste was prodigious. The *Iliad* was translated entirely by Pope; but in order to complete the *Odyssey* he called in the help of two Cambridge poet-scholars, Elijah Fenton and William Broome, who between them performed half the task. With the latter of these colleagues he unfortunately quarrelled. The scholarship of Pope was far from

adequate and was challenged even at the time; yet the most severe critics agreed with Bentley that, if we must "not call it Homer," it was yet a "pretty poem." Pope knew very little Greek, "an awkward qualification," as Mr. Leslie Stephen confesses, "for a translator of Homer." In early days in London, Pope had attempted to live the gay life to which his years, but not his constitution, attracted him; he had called himself "the gayest valetudinaire, the most thinking rake alive." But after 1715 he began, although not yet thirty, to settle into middle life. He moved from Binfield to Chiswick in 1716, and in 1718, when his father died, to the villa at Twickenham which he made so famous, and where he resided until the end of his life. Here he "twisted and twirled, and rhymed and harmonized" five acres of garden until it became "two or three sweet little lawns, opening into one another, and surrounded with impenetrable woods." His mystic temples made of shells and his gimcrack obelisks are gone, but his grotto still remains to witness to his ingenuity. While he was settling in, he lived with the Chancellor at Stanton Harcourt in Oxfordshire, and published the fifth volume of his Homer. At Twickenham he cemented his old and now somewhat mysterious friendship with Teresa and Martha Blount of Mapledurham; in 1730 he spoke of the latter as "a friend —a woman friend, God help me!—with whom I have spent three or four hours a day these fifteen years." In 1717 Pope issued his works in one quarto volume, and this contained the first appearance of two important poems, *Eloisa to Abelard* and *To the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*. After this, for many years, his energies were wholly absorbed by his work with Homer, which he gradually grew to feel a burden. He edited Parnell's Works, with a fine epistle of his own, in 1722. When Homer was finished, Pope joined Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay in the publication of two volumes of miscellanies (1727–28); the humours of this conjoint work set his mind running on satire, which he had lately neglected, and he began to prepare his elaborate and multiform lampoon, *The Dunciad*, which was appearing in many diverse conditions from 1728 till as late as 1742. This was a loud and sometimes a coarse burst of mockery directed at

William Walsh (1663–1708)

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

all the little scribblers of the hour, and at every one else who had awakened Pope's ill-humour by any sort of attack upon him. For twenty years he had been bottling up his resentment, and now he poured it forth in a glitter of liquid poison. The mortality among the Dunces was terrific. Meanwhile, using the *Dunciad* as a flood-gate, Pope was more seriously and artistically employed in storing up verse of a much more exquisite order. In 1731 he had published his epistle *Of False Taste*, and had read to Bolingbroke three books of a "noble work" on philosophy. This was the famous *Essay on Man*, which appeared in four instalments in 1733–34. From 1731 to 1738 Pope was publishing, in a rapid and continuous stream, imitations of the Epistles and the Satires of Horace, adapted to the mundane life of the early Georgian period. Among these, and destined to serve as a prologue to the double series, if it had ever been completed, was the splendid *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 1734, so rich in autobiographical detail. The general system upon which these poems were to take their appointed places in one great work fell through, however; but just as Pope was abandoning the idea, an adoring commentator arose in the shape of Warburton, who vindicated the ways of the poet to himself. By the means of this clever, unscrupulous divine, Pope was gradually weaned away from the influence of Bolingbroke, which had hitherto been supreme with him, and from this time he was, or at least believed himself to be, broadly orthodox. Warburton preserved his remarkable sway over Pope's mind until the death of the poet. During the last years of his life, Pope did not write much that was new, but polished his writings and re-arranged them for publication. His mother, to whom he was passionately attached, had died, at a very great age, in 1733, but Pope had Martha Blount with him to the last. Although he was only fifty-five, it became obvious in the early spring of 1744 that Pope was dying of old age; his bodily frame was quite worn out with asthma and dropsy. Friends gathered round him, Spence and Bolingbroke in particular. Quite clear in mind, it amused the poet to send out his Ethic Epistles to the last, and, as he smilingly said, to "dispense my morality as I lie dying," as he put it on another occasion, "of a hundred good symptoms." On the 30th of May 1744 he passed away painlessly and softly. He was buried—being, although the greatest poet of his time, yet a Catholic—in his family vault at Twickenham, not in Westminster Abbey. No English writer has attracted more curiosity, nor has

Martha Blount

From a Drawing by Gardner

interested more perennially successive generations of biographers. His figure is made very lively to us by a great variety of anecdotes. He was not blind to the peculiarities of his own physique; he did not disguise the fact that he had "a crazy carcase." He required to be lifted out of bed, and could not stand until he was laced into a sort of armour. Nevertheless he had great, but intermittent vivacity; when he was excited, he justly described himself as "a lively little creature, with long legs and arms; a spider is no ill emblem of him; he has been taken at a distance for a small windmill." His physical weakness, no doubt, was in great part responsible for a love of intrigue and even of downright trickery, which has made the unravelling of his correspondence an absolutely impossible task. This little brilliant man of letters, who had a host of admirable qualities, was an arch-deceiver and a miracle of half-hypocritical artfulness. For all this, poor man, his memory has been only too cruelly punished, and it behoves an honest reader to-day to think more of what was lovable and enlightened and impressive in the genius of Pope than of his ridiculous affectations and deplorable pettinesses. He was a very great man imprisoned in a little ricketty body which warped and pinched certain members of his mind. Let those who judge him harshly read the account of that long disease, his life, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

Teresa Blount

From a Drawing by Gardner

FROM THE "ESSAY ON CRITICISM."

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthened way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

"Belinda's Toilet"

From an Original Drawing by Benjamin West

BELINDA'S TOILET, FROM "THE RAPE OF THE LOCK."

And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;

Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

From "The Messiah."

The swain in barren deserts with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.
Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn:
To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
The smiling infant in his hand shall take
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their forky tongues shall innocently play.
Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!
See, a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs!
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.

See heav'n its sparkl:ng portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day !
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver horn ;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze

The only full-length Portrait of Pope

Drawn without his knowledge while conversing with Mr. Allen at Prior Park

O'erflow thy courts : the Light Himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine !
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
But fixed His word, His saving power remains ;—
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns !

From the "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady."

What can atone (oh ever-injured shade !)
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rights unpaid ?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed.
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned :
What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show ?
What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polished marble emulate thy face ?
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb ?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast :
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow ;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

From "An Essay on Man."

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind ;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way ;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n ;
Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire ;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

From "The Dunciad."

In flowed at once a gay embroidered race,
And tittering pushed the pedants off the place :
Some would have spoken, but the voice was drowned
By the French horn, or by the opening hound.
The first came forwards, with as easy mien,
As if he saw St. James's and the queen.
When thus th' attendant orator began,
"Receive, great empress ! thy accomplished son :
Thine from the birth, and sacred from the rod,
A dauntless infant ! never scared with God.
The sire saw, one by one, his virtues wake :
The mother begged the blessing of a rake.

Thou gavest that ripeness, which so soon began,
And ceased so soon, he ne'er was boy, nor man.
Through school and college, thy kind cloud o'ercast,
Safe and unseen the young Æneas past:
Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down,
Stunned with his giddy larum half the town.
Intrepid then, o'er seas and lands he flew:
Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.
There all thy gifts and graces we display,
Thou, only thou, directing all our way!

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To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs,
Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons;
Or Tiber, now no longer Roman, rolls,
Vain of Italian arts, Italian souls:
To happy convents, bosomed deep in vines,
Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines:
To isles of fragrance, lily-silvered vales,
Diffusing languor in the panting gales:
To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
Love-whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.
But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
And Cupids ride the lion of the deeps."

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But all our praises why should lords engross?
Rise, honest muse! and sing the Man of Ross:
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.

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Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
He feeds yon alms-house, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;
Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? the Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes, and gives.

Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balked are the courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now a useless race.
B. Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What all so wish, but want the pow'r to do!
Oh say, what sums that generous hand supply?
What mines, to swell that boundless charity?
P. Of debts, and taxes, wife and children clear,
This man possessed—five hundred pounds a year.
Blush, grandeur, blush! proud courts, withdraw your blaze!
Ye little stars! hide your diminished rays.

Stanton Harcourt in the Eighteenth Century
From an Engraving after Sandby's Picture

Matthew Prior (1664–1721)

Matthew Prior (1664–1721) was the son of a joiner at Wimborne Minster, in Dorsetshire, where he was born on the 21st of July 1664. The family moved to London, and the future poet was sent to Westminster School. While he was there, under Dr. Busby, the elder Prior died, leaving his wife so poor that she was obliged to take Matthew away from school. He was put to serve in the bar of the Rhenish Wine-house in Cannon Row, of which his uncle was the proprietor, and there Lord Dorset one day found the boy with a Horace in his hand. He told his fashionable friends, and it became a recognised amusement to go to the wine-shop to hear the vintner's boy read Latin poetry. With Lord Dorset's help he went back to Westminster School; he made friends with the young Montagues, and was much in the company of the elder of these (Charles, afterwards Lord Halifax). In 1683 Prior

accepted a scholarship at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he stayed many years. In 1687 he was engaged with Charles Montagu on the facetious pamphlet of *The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd;* this is said to have greatly annoyed Dryden, who had "always been very civil" to Prior. About 1690, having gradually grown dissatisfied with his position as the resident fellow of a Cambridge college, Prior, still under the tireless patronage of Dorset, began his career as a public servant. He was now for several years secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, our Ambassador at the Hague. He showed great ability as a diplomatist, and in 1698, after useful service at the Treaty of Ryswick, he was appointed Secretary to the British Embassy in Paris. Honours were now showered upon him, and in 1699 Prior came back to England an Under-Secretary of State. After a brief experience in Parliament, he went back to Paris in 1712 as Ambassador, but at the fall of the Tories he was impeached, and was kept in prison from 1715 to 1717. While in confinement he wrote his *Alma*. He left prison with nothing to live on but his college fellowship, and his friends set about to collect his poems and issue them in a sumptuous subscription folio. This was done in 1719, and Prior received £4000. Lord Harley gave him an equal sum to buy the estate of Down Hall, in Essex. The rest of the poet's life was spent in ease improving this pretty property. But his health was declining, and he did not enjoy Down Hall long. He died "of a lingering fever" on the 18th of September 1721 at Wimpole, where he was the guest of Lord Harley (the second Earl of Oxford). Prior was buried in Westminster Abbey, in a tomb surmounted by a fine bust by Coysevox. He was "a spare, frail, solemn-faced man," very grave in public employments, but, "alone with his friends, Lord, how merry was he!"

Matthew Prior

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

To a Child of Quality.

Lords, knights, and 'squires, the numerous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summon'd by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

all the little scribblers of the hour, and at every one else who had awakened Pope's ill-humour by any sort of attack upon him. For twenty years he had been bottling up his resentment, and now he poured it forth in a glitter of liquid poison. The mortality among the Dunces was terrific. Meanwhile, using the *Dunciad* as a flood-gate, Pope was more seriously and artistically employed in storing up verse of a much more exquisite order. In 1731 he had published his epistle *Of False Taste*, and had read to Bolingbroke three books of a "noble work" on philosophy. This was the famous *Essay on Man*, which appeared in four instalments in 1733–34. From 1731 to 1738 Pope was publishing, in a rapid and continuous stream, imitations of the Epistles and the Satires of Horace, adapted to the mundane life of the early Georgian period. Among these, and destined to serve as a prologue to the double series, if it had ever been completed, was the splendid *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 1734, so rich in autobiographical detail. The general system upon which these poems were to take their appointed places in one great work fell through, however; but just as Pope was abandoning the idea, an adoring commentator arose in the shape of Warburton, who vindicated the ways of the poet to himself. By the means of this clever, unscrupulous divine, Pope was gradually weaned away from the influence of Bolingbroke, which had hitherto been supreme with him, and from this time he was, or at least believed himself to be, broadly orthodox. Warburton preserved his remarkable sway over Pope's mind until the death of the poet. During the last years of his life, Pope did not write much that was new, but polished his writings and re-arranged them for publication. His mother, to whom he was passionately attached, had died, at a very great age, in 1733, but Pope had Martha Blount with him to the last. Although he was only fifty-five, it became obvious in the early spring of 1744 that Pope was dying of old age; his bodily frame was quite worn out with asthma and dropsy. Friends gathered round him, Spence and Bolingbroke in particular. Quite clear in mind, it amused the poet to send out his Ethic Epistles to the last, and, as he smilingly said, to "dispense my morality as I lie dying," as he put it on another occasion, "of a hundred good symptoms." On the 30th of May 1744 he passed away painlessly and softly. He was buried—being, although the greatest poet of his time, yet a Catholic—in his family vault at Twickenham, not in Westminster Abbey. No English writer has attracted more curiosity, nor has

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Teresa Blount

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FROM THE "ESSAY ON CRITICISM."

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthened way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

"Belinda's Toilet"

From an Original Drawing by Benjamin West

BELINDA'S TOILET, FROM "THE RAPE OF THE LOCK."

And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;

Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

From "The Messiah."

The swain in barren deserts with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.
Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn:
To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead;
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
The smiling infant in his hand shall take
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
Pleased, the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their forky tongues shall innocently play.
Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!
See, a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs!
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.

See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day !
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver horn ;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze

The only full-length Portrait of Pope

Drawn without his knowledge while conversing with Mr. Allen at Prior Park

O'erflow thy courts : the Light Himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine !
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
But fixed His word, His saving power remains ;—
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns !

From the "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady."

What can atone (oh ever-injured shade!)
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rights unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed.
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned:
What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polished marble emulate thy face?
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

From "An Essay on Man."

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

From "The Dunciad."

In flowed at once a gay embroidered race,
And tittering pushed the pedants off the place:
Some would have spoken, but the voice was drowned
By the French horn, or by the opening hound.
The first came forwards, with as easy mien,
As if he saw St. James's and the queen.
When thus th' attendant orator began,
"Receive, great empress! thy accomplished son:
Thine from the birth, and sacred from the rod,
A dauntless infant! never scared with God.
The sire saw, one by one, his virtues wake:
The mother begged the blessing of a rake.

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And ceased so soon, he ne'er was boy, nor man.
Through school and college, thy kind cloud o'ercast,
Safe and unseen the young Æneas past:
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Or Tiber, now no longer Roman, rolls,
Vain of Italian arts, Italian souls:
To happy convents, bosomed deep in vines,
Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines:
To isles of fragrance, lily-silvered vales,
Diffusing languor in the panting gales:
To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
Love-whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.
But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
And Cupids ride the lion of the deeps."

FROM THE "MORAL ESSAYS."

But all our praises why should lords engross?
Rise, honest muse! and sing the Man of Ross:
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.

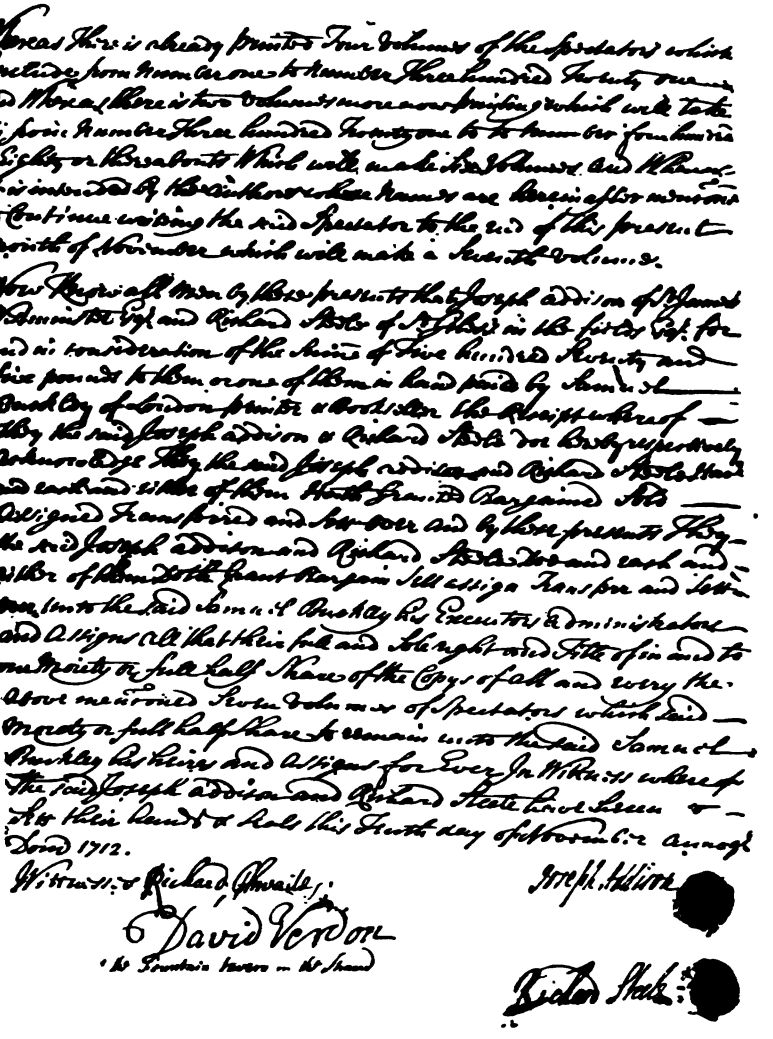
Title-page from "The Dunciad," 1729

Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
He feeds yon alms-house, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;
Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? the Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes, and gives.

eight Latin pieces in a University miscellany. He now, at last, at the age of twenty-seven, left Oxford at the suggestion of the future Lord Halifax. He visited all that was most noteworthy in northern and central Italy, and passed through Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, not returning to England until late in 1703, after an absence of four years. In 1705 he published *Remarks* on what he had seen; and during his journeys he had written a good deal of an original kind which he slowly gave to the world. Addison was in great straits on his return to England, the death of his father and his failure, by what seems an odd want of adroitness, to secure a small appointment as travelling tutor to the Duke of Somerset's son, having landed him in great embarrassment. For some time he "lodged up three pair of stairs over a small shop," in a state of abject poverty, from which the success of his poem, *The Campaign*, saved him. He immediately received place under the Whigs, and was appointed in 1706 to an Under-Secretaryship of State. Addison entered Parliament in 1708, but the election was quashed a year later. Meanwhile he kept his post, and on losing it, on the last day of 1709, was immediately appointed Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Keeper of the Records. Before he went to Ireland, Addison became intimate with Swift, who prayed that "too much business may not spoil *le plus honnête homme du monde*," but unfortunately this friendship was soon damped by the violence of political party. In 1711, after the fall of the Whig Ministry, Addison found himself deprived of most of his places, and "an estate in the Indies worth £14,000," whatever this last may have been. He was nevertheless now no longer poor, and he bought an estate in Warwickshire, Bilton, for £10,000. To the *Tatler*, as published by Steele in 1709, Addison had meanwhile become a contributor, and Steele described his friend as performing that office "with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid—I was undone by my own auxiliary; when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." The *Tatler* ceased to appear on the 22nd of January 1711, and on the 1st of March of the same year Addison and he founded the *Spectator*, which was in every way a more composite and ambitious undertaking, and which enjoyed a prodigious success. It was dropped in December 1712. Addison had for many years past wished to produce a verse-tragedy perfect in classical form, and even while at Oxford he had selected the subject of *Cato* for it. As early as 1703 the play was finished enough to be shown by Steele to Cibber. One by one the friends of Addison saw the tragedy in manuscript, but all doubted its fitness for the stage. Pope expressed the general opinion when he said that the author "had better not act it, but would get reputation enough by only printing it." In 1713, however, the position of parties was such as to remind the group of friends of the familiar manuscript tragedy, and Addison was suddenly urged to seize the opportunity. He did so, and it was presently produced on the stage. It enjoyed an amazing success, and it may be held that the evening of the 30th of April 1713 was the climax of Addison's existence. The tragedy enjoyed a run of then unprecedented length, and, being printed, was hailed all over Europe as a masterpiece of regularity and elegance. In the midst of this delirium of eulogy, the old critic, John Dennis, raised, almost alone, the protesting voice of common sense. From this point in his life the lucky star of Addison seems to have been gradually clouded, through no fault of his. The quarrel with Pope, which dates from 1715, although he took

JOSEPH ADDISON.
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY MICHAEL DAHL.

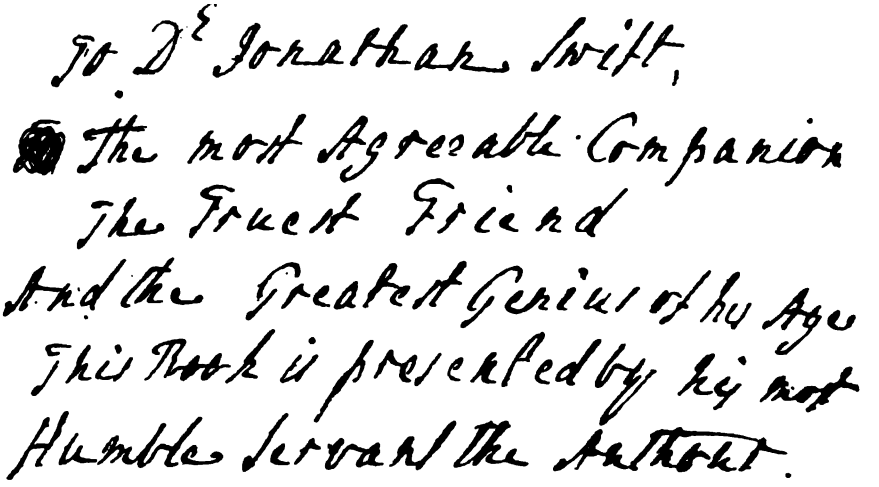
it with dignity, must have caused him great annoyance, and he was but poorly served by the "little senate" of second-class writers which he collected around him at Button's, although the faithful friendship, amounting almost to adoration, which was displayed by Tickell cannot but have gratified Addison. But the latter began to age early, and already, no doubt, was apt to sit "attentive to his



Facsimile of the Assignment of the "Spectator," signed by Addison and Steele

own applause," and to offer those features of human weakness which the cruel penetration of Pope has preserved for posterity in the venomous portrait of Atticus. The energies of Addison were now distributed between politics, in which he represented the most moderate of the Whigs, and the composition of an apologetic work on the history of Christianity, which he left unfinished. At the death of Anne, Addison returned with the Whigs to office, and was Chief Secretary in Ireland for some months of 1714–15. When he resigned this post he began to

edit a newspaper in the interests of the Government, namely, the *Freeholder* (1715–16). This journal ceased when its work was done, and Addison was made a Commissioner for Trade. In the summer of 1716 he married the widowed Countess of Warwick, to whom he had been long attached, but there is more than a fear that Addison found "wedded discord with a noble wife." In 1717, when Sunderland became Prime Minister, he appointed Addison a Secretary of State, but the essayist was not conspicuously successful as a politician. In particular, during the ten years during which he sat for Malmesbury in the House of Commons he spoke but once, and then broke down in speaking: "he had too beautiful an imagination," one of his contemporaries said, "to make a man of business." In March 1718 Addison resigned his office, his health beginning to give him serious anxiety. It is painful to record that the last year of Addison's life was embittered by an acrimonious controversy with his old and close friend, Steele. Worn out with asthma and dropsy, Addison was now sinking, and on the


To Dr Jonathan Swift,
The most Agreeable Companion
The Truest Friend
And the Greatest Genius of his Age
This Book is presented by his most
Humble Servant the Author.

Autograph Inscription of Addison's to Jonathan Swift

17th of June 1719 he died at Holland House, having lately entered his forty-eighth year. He called his stepson, the Earl of Warwick, to his bedside, and bid him "see in what peace a Christian can die." Addison lay in state in Jerusalem Chamber, and then was buried "by midnight lamps" in Westminster Abbey, as Tickell has described in his beautiful and touching elegy. Addison's only child, an unmarried daughter, survived until 1797.

Will Wimble.

Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the county, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man. He makes a May-fly to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natured officious fellow, and very much esteemed on account of his family, he is a very welcome guest at every house, and keeps

up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. Will is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has weaved, or a setting-dog that he has made himself. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring as often as he meets them "how they wear!" These gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humours make Will the darling of the country.

Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, the Friend and Patron of Addison

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

Haunted.

At a little distance from Sir Roger's house, among the ruins of an old abbey, there is a long walk of aged elms, which are shot up so very high, that when one passes under them, the rooks and crows that rest upon the tops of them seem to be cawing in another region. I am very much delighted with this sort of noise, which I consider as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who supplies the wants of his whole creation, and who, in the beautiful language of the Psalms, feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. I like this retirement the better, because of an ill report it lies under of being haunted; for which reason (as I have been told in the family) no living creature ever walks in it besides the chaplain. My good friend the butler desired me with a very grave face not to venture myself in it after sunset, for that one of the footmen had been almost frighted out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without an head: to which he added, that about a month ago one of the maids coming home late that way with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling among the bushes that she let it fall.

I was taking a walk in this place last night between the hours of nine and ten, and could not but fancy it one of the most proper scenes in the world for a ghost to appear in. The ruins of the abbey are scattered up and down on every side, and half covered with ivy and elder-bushes, the harbours of several solitary birds which seldom make their appearance till the dusk of the evening. The place was formerly a churchyard, and has still several marks in it of graves and burying-places. There is such an echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if you stamp but a little louder than ordinary, you hear the sound repeated. At the same time the walk of elms, with the croaking of the ravens which from time to time are heard from the tops of them, looks exceeding solemn and venerable. These objects naturally raise seriousness and attention; and

when night heightens the awfulness of the place, and pours out her supernumerary horrors upon everything in it, I do not at all wonder that weak minds fill it with spectres and apparitions.

THE HEAD-DRESS.

The ladies have been for some time in a kind of moulting season with regard to that part of their dress, having cast great quantities of riband, lace, and cambric, and in some measure reduced that part of the human figure to the beautiful globular form which is natural to it. We have for a great while expected what kind of ornament would be substituted in the place of those antiquated commodes. But our female projectors were all the last summer so taken up with the improvement of their petticoats, that they had not time to attend to anything else; but having at length sufficiently adorned their lower parts, they now begin to turn their thoughts upon the other extremity, as well remembering the old kitchen proverb, "that if you light the fire at both ends, the middle will shift for itself."

I am engaged in this speculation by a sight which I lately met with at the opera. As I was standing in the hinder part of a box, I took notice of a little cluster of women sitting together in the prettiest-coloured hoods that I ever saw. One of them was blue, another yellow, and another philomot; the fourth was of a pink colour, and the fifth of a pale green. I looked with as much pleasure upon this little party-coloured assembly as upon a bed of tulips, and did not know at first whether it might not be an embassy of Indian queens; but upon my going about into the pit, and taking them in front, I was immediately undeceived, and saw so much beauty in every face that I found them all to be English. Such eyes and lips, cheeks and foreheads, could be the growth of no other country. The complexion of their faces hindered me from observing any farther the colour of their hoods, though I could easily perceive, by that unspeakable satisfaction which appeared in their looks, that their own thoughts were wholly taken up on those pretty ornaments they wore upon their heads.

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729)

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729), although always reported as being younger than his most distinguished friend, was, it has lately been discovered, born in March 1672, whereas Addison was not born until May. Steele was born in Dublin, where his father practised as an attorney; the latter died when his son was five years old, and Steele has given an enchanting picture of the emotions which his father's death awakened. In 1685 the boy was sent to the Charterhouse, and passed in 1690 to Christ Church, Oxford, and in 1691 to Merton College. It is supposed that he left the University and became a trooper in the Duke of Ormond's Life Guards in 1694; in his military capacity he was present at Queen Mary's funeral, of which his earliest publication, *The Procession*, of 1695, is a versified memorial. Of Steele's movements

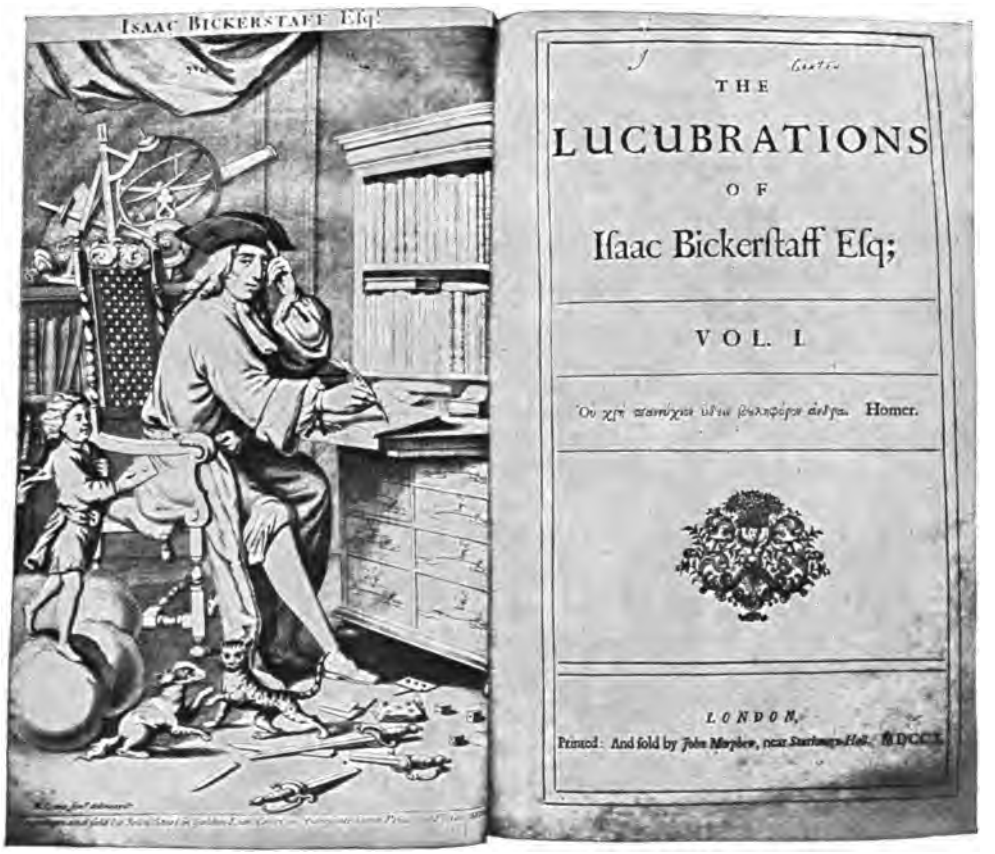
Sir Richard Steele's Cottage on Haverstock Hill
From an old Print

in the next six years we know very little, but during part of the time, at least, he served as a captain of Fusiliers. In 1701 Steele published his first important work, the *Christian Hero*, which was considered puritanical by his companions, and landed him in a duel, in which he ran his critic through the body. He now began to write for the stage, and his first comedy, *The Funeral*, dates from the close of 1701. His idea was to introduce morality to the stage, and make "virtue and vice appear just as they ought to do," and not as they are travestied in the art of Wycherley and Congreve. In the *Lying Lover* (1703) Steele was still more didactic, and it is not to be wondered at that his comedy was "damned for its piety." He tried a third time, with the *Tender Husband* (1705), a better play, but as complete a failure. He was by this time married to a lady, vaguely spoken of as "of vast possessions," who died in 1706. In May 1707 Steele received from Harley the important post of Gazetteer. Immediately after the death of his first wife, and perhaps at her funeral, Steele is believed to have made the acquaintance of Miss Mary Scurlock, a Welsh lady with "expectations." It was to her, before and after their marriage, that Steele addressed the extraordinary correspondence which, printed first in 1787, has done more than anything else to make us acquainted with his character. The marriage between Dick Steele and his "dear lovely Prue" took place in September 1707. His life with this handsome and fairly amiable lady was a chequered one. As Mr. Austin Dobson says, Steele was loyal, affectionate, and warm-hearted, but "hopelessly sanguine, restless, and impulsive." He took wine too freely; he squandered money far beyond his means; and these faults greatly strained Mrs. Steele's patience; but though they fought, they never parted, and to the last she was his "absolute governess," and "adored capricious beauty." The great wits of the age of Anne were now coming closer and closer; in 1708 Swift speaks of the "triumvirate of Addison, Steele and me," and when they met, Congreve and Pope were often of the party. Early in 1709 Steele borrowed the name of "Isaac Bickerstaff" from Swift to use as a pseudonym in the *Tatler*, which he began to publish on the 12th of April; this was a *Letter of Intelligence* destined to "gratify

Sir Richard Steele

After the Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller at Bayfordbury

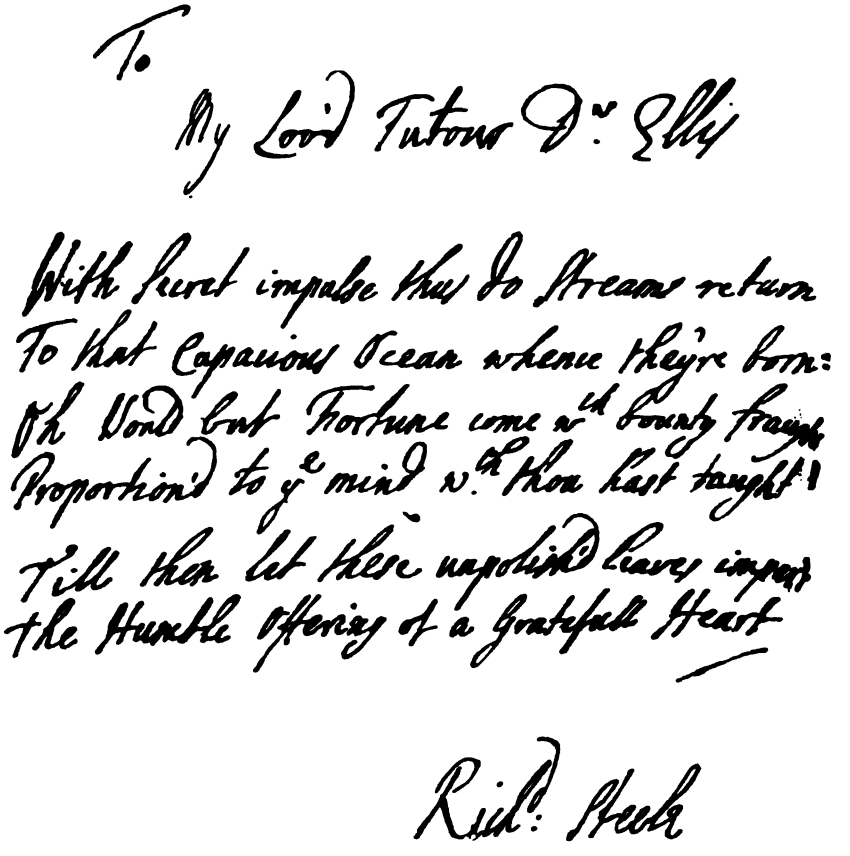
the curiosity of persons of all conditions, and each sex." At first Steele wrote it all himself, but soon he called in Addison to help. It ceased in January 1711, and was succeeded within two months by the *Spectator*, another folio sheet, consisting only of a single essay, whereas the *Tatler* had given a variety of news. The *Spectator*, too, came out on every week-day. The plan of this famous literary journal was, as we have it upon the evidence of Tickell, projected by Steele and Addison in concert, but it was the latter who represented the central figure of the Spectator Club, the celebrated Sir Roger de Coverley. When the paper ceased,



Facsimile Title and Frontispiece of First Collected Edition of the "Tatler"

it was found that Addison had contributed a somewhat larger number of essays than Steele, very few being from the pen of Eustace Budgell, Pope, and one or two others. The sale was enormous for those days,—it is estimated at 10,000 copies. In December 1712 this "noble entertainment for persons of a refined taste," as Berkeley called it, came abruptly to an end. Early in the career of the *Spectator* Swift had quarrelled with Addison, but he remained some time longer on terms of amity with Steele. The latter was now deep in debt, but the death of his mother-in-law, in 1713, brought him considerable accession of wealth. He was foolish enough to take a costly house in Bloomsbury Square, and to launch out into

every form of extravagance. In March he started a new daily paper, the *Guardian*, in which Addison originally took no part, but was soon drawn in. Steele and Swift were presently involved in acute hostility, and for political reasons the former resigned his offices; he left the *Guardian* almost entirely to Addison and Budgell, and entered the House of Commons as M.P. for Stockbridge. His purely literary work now took mainly the character of pamphlets, and for what he wrote about the fall of Dunkirk he was, in March 1714, expelled from the House. Steele, who had given up £400 a year to enter Parliament, was now in a deplorable


To
My Lord Tutour Dr. Ellis
With Secret impulse thus do Streams return
To that Capacious Ocean whence they're born:
Oh Wond'rous Fortune come w^th bounty fraught
Proportion'd to y^e mind w^ch thou hast taught!
Till then let these unpolish'd Lines implore
The Humble offering of a Grateful Heart
Richd. Steele

Autograph Verse from Steele to Dr. Ellis

plight. He continued the active publication of newspapers and pamphlets, and the death of Queen Anne restored him to success. He went on writing dull political tracts, and Swift in cruel justice said that Steele had "obliged his party with a very awkward pamphleteer in the room of an excellent droll." In 1715 he was knighted, and became Supervisor (or Manager) of Drury Lane Theatre, at a salary of £700 a year. Early in the same year he was elected M.P. for Boroughbridge. In the following years we find him frequently visiting Scotland, upon public business; and in 1717 Lady Steele was principally living in Wales, to look after an estate they had at Carmarthen; to this circumstance we owe a large number of her husband's delightful letters to her. She died late in 1718, and

after that event Steele had little luck. In 1719 he quarrelled with Addison, and in 1722 he was again in Parliament, as M.P. for Wendover. In this year, moreover, he brought out his comedy of the *Conscious Lovers* with success, but presently fell into a condition of bankruptcy. He went to live at Hereford, and later at Carmarthen, where he was afflicted with a stroke of paralysis. "He retained his cheerful sweetness of temper to the last," but was a hopelessly broken man, to whom death came as a release on the 1st of September 1729. The startling inconsistencies of Steele's character and his restless incoherency have led to very diverse judgments as to his character, but he seems to have been a weak man who yet loved honesty and virtue with all his heart. He was what was called "a black man," with a dark complexion, very bright eyes, and deep brown hair.

Sir Richard Steele

After the Portrait by Jonathan Richardson

POLITENESS.

I do not doubt but England is at present as polite a nation as any in the world; but any man who thinks can easily see, that the affectation of being gay and in fashion has very near eaten up our good sense and our religion. Is there anything so just as that mode and gallantry should be built upon exerting ourselves in what is proper and agreeable to the institutions of justice and piety among us? And yet is there anything more common, than that we run in perfect contradiction to them? All which is supported by no other pretension, than that it is done with what we call a good grace.

Nothing ought to be held laudable or becoming, but what nature itself should prompt us to think so. Respect to all kinds of superiors is founded, methinks, upon instinct; and yet what is so ridiculous as age! I make this abrupt transition to the mention of this vice more than any other, in order to introduce a little story, which I think a pretty instance, that the most polite age is in danger of being the most vicious.

It happened at Athens, during a public representation of some play exhibited in honour of the commonwealth, that an old gentleman came too late for a place suitable to his age and quality. Many of the young gentlemen who observed the difficulty and confusion he was in, made signs to him that they would accommodate him if he came where they sat. The good man bustled through the crowd accordingly; but when he came to the seats to which he was invited, the jest was to sit close and expose him, as he stood, out of countenance, to the whole audience. The frolic went round all the Athenian benches. But on those occasions there were also particular places assigned for foreigners. When the good man skulked towards the boxes appointed for the Lacedemonians, that honest people, more virtuous than polite,

rose up all to a man, and with the greatest respect received him among them. The Athenians being suddenly touched with the sense of the Spartan virtue and their own degeneracy, gave a thunder of applause; and the old man cried out,—The Athenians understand what is good, but the Lacedemonians practise it.

IMPUDENCE.

I take an impudent fellow to be a sort of outlaw in good-breeding, and therefore what is said of him no nation or person can be concerned for. For this reason, one may be free upon him. I have put myself to great pains in considering this prevailing quality which we call impudence, and have taken notice that it exerts itself in a different manner, according to the different soils wherein such subjects of these dominions, as are masters of it, were born. Impudence in an Englishman is sullen and insolent; in a Scotchman, it is untractable and rapacious; in an Irishman, absurd and fawning. As the course of the world now runs, the impudent Englishman behaves like a surly landlord, the Scot like an ill-received guest, and the Irishman like a stranger, who knows he is not welcome. There is seldom anything entertaining either in the impudence of a South or North Briton; but that of an Irishman is always comic. A true and genuine impudence is ever the effect of ignorance without the least sense of it. The best and most successful Starers now in this town are of that nation; they have usually the advantage of the stature mentioned in the above letter of my correspondent, and generally take their stands in the eye of women of fortune; insomuch that I have known one of them, three months after he came from plough, with a tolerable good air lead out a woman from a play, which one of our own breed, after four years at Oxford and two at the Temple, would have been afraid to look at.

We have hitherto said nothing of JONATHAN SWIFT, yet he flows right across the present field of our vision, from William III. to George II. His course is that of a fiery comet that dashes through the constellation of the wits of Anne, and falls in melancholy ashes long after the occultation of the last of them. The friend and companion of them for a season, he pursues his flaming course with little real relation to their milder orbits, and is one of the most singular and most original figures that our history has produced. Swift was a bundle of paradoxes—a great churchman who has left not a trace on our ecclesiastical system, an ardent politician who was never more than a fly on the wheel. He is immortal on the one side on which he believed his genius ephemeral; he survives solely, but splendidly, as a man of letters. His career was a failure: he began life as a gentleman's dependant, he quitted it "like a poisoned rat in a hole"; with matchless energy and ambition, he won neither place nor power: and in the brief heyday of his influence with the Ministry, he who helped others was impotent to endow himself. Swift is the typical instance of the powerlessness of pure intellect to secure any but intellectual triumphs. But even the victories of his brain were tainted; his genius left a taste of brass on his own palate. That Swift was ever happy, that his self-torturing nature was capable of contentment, is not certain; that for a long period of years he was wretched beyond the lot of man is evident, and those have not sounded the depths of human misery who have not followed in their mysterious obscurity the movements of the character of Swift.

His will was too despotic to yield to his misfortunes; his pride sustained him, and in middle life a fund of restless animal spirits. We know but little of his early years, yet enough to see that the *splendida bilis*, the *sæva indignatio*, which ill-health exacerbated, were his companions from the first. We cannot begin to comprehend his literary work without recognising this. His weapon was ink, and he loved to remember that gall and copperas went to the making of it. It was in that deadest period, at the very close of the seventeenth century, that his prodigious talent first made itself apparent. With no apprenticeship in style, no relation of discipleship to any previous French[1] or English writer, but steeped in the Latin classics, he produced, at the age of thirty, two of the most extraordinary masterpieces of humour and satire which were ever written, the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*. It was not until five or six years later that he gave them together, anonymously, to the press. In the *Tale of a Tub* every characteristic of Swift's style is revealed—the mordant wit, the vehement graceful ease, the stringent simplicity. To the end of his days he never wrote better things than the description of the goddess of Criticism drawn by geese in a chariot, the dedication to Prince Prosperity with its splendid hilarity and irony, the doubly distilled allegorical apologue of the Spider and the Bee. In his poisonous attacks on the deists, in his gleams of sulky misanthropy, in the strange filthiness of his fancy, in the stranger exhilaration which seizes him whenever the idea of

Illustration from the "Battle of the Books"
From the 1769 Edition of Swift's Works

[1] He may, it is true, have seen the *Combat des Livres* of Callières.

madness is introduced—in all these things Swift reveals his essential character in this his first and perhaps greatest book. Although every one admired it, the *Tale of a Tub* was doubtless fatal to his ambition, thus wrecked at the outset on the reef of his ungovernable satire. The book, to be plain, is a long gibe at theology, and it is not surprising that no bishopric could ever be given to the inventor of the Brown Loaf and the Universal Pickle. He might explain away his mockery, declare it to have been employed in the Anglican cause, emphasise the denial that his aim was irreligious; the damning evidence remained that when he had had the sacred garments in his hands he had torn away, like an infuriated ape, as much of the gold fringe as he could. The fact was that, without any design of impiety, he knew not how to be devout. He always, by instinct, saw the hollowness and the seamy side. His enthusiasms were negative, and his burning imagination, even when he applied it to religion, revealed not heaven but hell to him.

Illustration from the "Tale of a Tub

The power and vitality of such a nature could not be concealed; they drew every sincere intellect towards him. Already, in 1705, Addison was hailing Swift as "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of the age." We take him up again in 1711, when the slender volume of *Miscellanies* reminds us of what he had been as a writer from the age of thirty-five to forty-five. The contents of this strange book name for us the three caustic religious treatises, the first of Swift's powerful political tracts (the *Sacramental Test*), various other

waifs and rags from his culminating year, 1708, gibes and flouts of many kinds revealing the spirit of "a very positive young man," trifles in verse and prose to amuse his friends the Whig Ministers or the ladies of Lord Berkeley's family. Nothing could be more occasional than all this; nothing, at first sight, less imbued with intensity or serious feeling. Swift's very compliments are impertinent, his arguments in favour of Christianity subversive. But under all this there is the passion of an isolated intellect, and he was giving it play in the frivolities of a compromising humour.

The published writings of Swift during the first forty-four years of his life were comprised in two volumes of very moderate dimensions. But if the purely literary outcome of all this period had been exiguous, it was now to grow scantier still. At the very moment when the group of Anne wits, led by Pope and Addison, were entering with animation upon their best work, Swift, almost ostentatiously, withdrew to the sphere of affairs, and for ten years refrained entirely from all but political authorship. His unexampled *Journal to Stella*, it is true, belongs to this time of obscuration, but it is hardly literature, though of the most intense and pathetic interest. Swift now stood "ten times better" with the new Tories than ever he did with the old Whigs, and his pungent pen poured forth lampoons and satirical projects. The influence of Swift's work of this period upon the style of successive English publicists is extremely curious; he began a new order of political warfare, demanding lighter arms and swifter manœuvres than the seventeenth century had dreamed of. Even Halifax seems cold and slow beside the lightning changes of mood, the inexorable high spirits of Swift. That such a tract as the *Sentiments of a Church of England Man*, with its gusts of irony, its white heat of preposterous moderation, led on towards Junius is obvious; but Swift is really the creator of the whole school of eighteenth-century rhetorical diatribe on its better side, wherever it is not leaden and conventional. It may be said that he invented a vital polemical system, which was used through the remainder of the century by every one who dealt in that kind of literature, and who was at the same time strong enough to wield such thunderbolts.

That no one, until the time of Burke, who had other ammunition of his own, could throw these bolts about with anything of Swift's fierce momentum, it is scarcely necessary to say. His velocity as an antagonist was extraordinary. He was troubled by no doubt of his own opinion, nor by any mercy for that of his enemy. He was the first Englishman to realise, in the very nest of optimism, that the public institutions of a society could be, and probably were, corrupt. In the generation of Shaftesbury this discovery was really a momentous one. Mandeville made it soon after, but to his squalid moral nature the shock was not so great as it was to Swift's. That most things were evil and odious in the best of all possible worlds was a revelation to Swift that exhilarated him almost to ecstasy. He could hardly believe it to be true, and

trembled lest he should be forced to admit that, after all, Pope and Shaftesbury were sound in their optimism. But his satire probed the insufficiency of mankind in place after place, and there gradually rose in Swift, like an intoxication, a certainty of the vileness of the race. When he was quite convinced, madness was close upon him, but in the interval he wrote that sinister and incomparable masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*, in which misanthropy reaches the pitch of a cardinal virtue, and the despicable race of man is grossly and finally humiliated.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) was born at 7 Hoey's Court, Dublin, on the 30th of November 1667. He was the posthumous son of Jonathan Swift, younger son of Thomas Swift, vicar of Goodrich, near Ross, in Herefordshire, who had been, from January 1666 to April 1667, Steward of the King's Inns in Dublin; his mother had been Abigail Erick of Leicester; the family of the Swifts came from Yorkshire. As Swift was always anxious to insist, he was an Englishman except for the accident which made him born an Irishman. "I was a year old before I left Ireland, and to my sorrow did not die before I came back to it." To claim him as a Milesian, therefore, requires courage. Swift's return to England was abrupt; he was kidnapped over to Whitehaven by a nurse who could not bear to part with him. Mrs. Swift does not seem to have been anxious about him, and he was perhaps at Whitehaven until, about 1671, she came over to her native town of Leicester. In 1673, at the age of six, Swift was sent to Kilkenny School, called the Eton of Ireland, where, in process of time, Congreve became his school-fellow. He stayed at Kilkenny until in April 1682 he was entered at Trinity College, Dublin. But, so he tells us, "by the ill-treatment of his nearest relations, he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits that he too much neglected his academic studies." In 1686 he was given a degree, but, "in a manner little to his credit," *speciali gratia*. He continued on at Trinity College, but was guilty of repeated irregularities and cynical recklessness of conduct; on his twenty-first birthday he was severely punished and suspended from his degrees. But this marked the close of his academic career; in company with hosts of others, he fled to England after the Revolution of 1688, where his mother received him at Leicester. He was presently offered a situation in the family of Sir William Temple, who was a connection on the father's as well as on the

Jonathan Swift
From George Vertue's Engraving

mother's side. Temple was now retired from diplomacy to his house, Moor Park, Farnham; he does not seem to have discovered that his amanuensis was a man of genius. In May 1694 Swift left Temple in a fit of sudden anger, passed over into Ireland, and in October was ordained deacon; he took priest's orders in the following January. His quarrel with his kinsman and patron was, however, healed, and after an absence of exactly two years Swift returned to Moor Park. This was the approximate date of the first of Swift's mysterious relations with women; he left behind him in Ireland a "Varina" (Miss Waring), with whom he was in passionate correspondence. It is believed that Swift's second period of residence at Moor Park was happier than the first, and that Temple learned to value his strange inmate. Those who have condemned Sir

View of Trinity College, Dublin

From an old Engraving

William have perhaps forgotten how much there was in his agreeable and cultivated conversation which must have been far more attractive to Swift than what most country houses at that day could afford him. We find the latter already an invalid, but trying to combat ill-health by violent daily exercise. He was isolated; "I am often," he says, "two or three months without seeing anybody besides the family," but one member of this was Esther Johnson, the celebrated "Stella." Early in 1699 Temple died, and Swift sincerely mourned his loss. Meanwhile, in the retirement and obscurity of Moor Park, Swift had composed some astonishing things—the *Tale of a Tub* in 1696, the *Battle of the Books* in 1697; his stiff attempts at the Pindaric Ode were earlier. He had been reading history and the classics with extreme eagerness and fulness. He was now in his thirty-second year, with a small inheritance from Temple, but with no

[redacted]

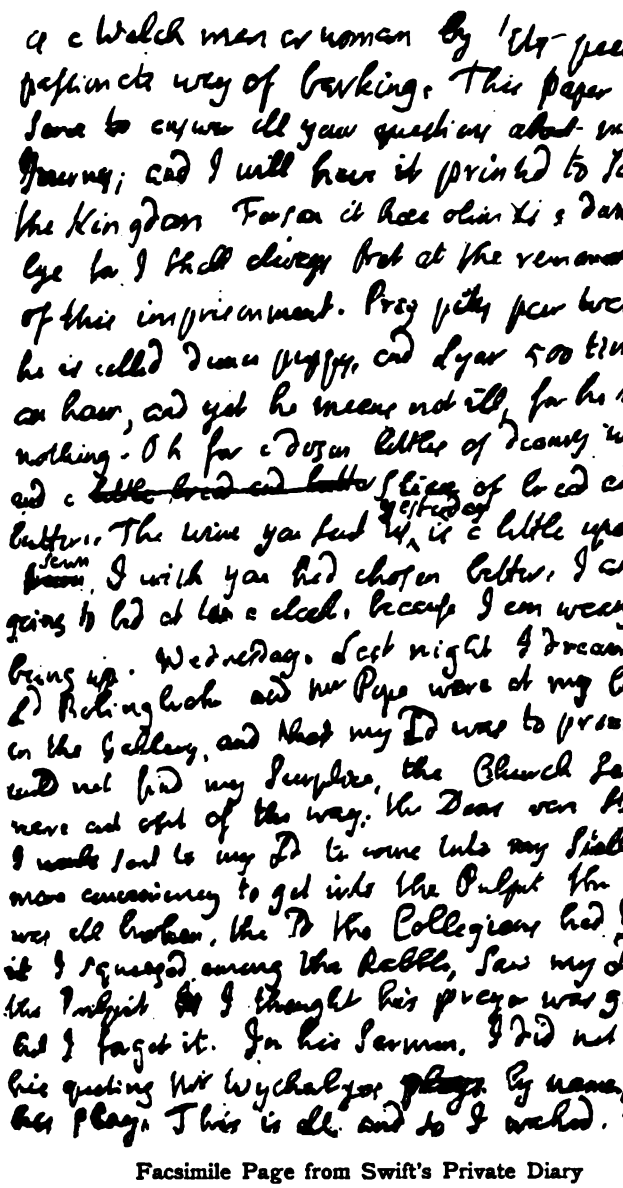
JONATHAN SWIFT.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY. JERVAS.

apparent means of income. After some disappointment, he accepted the post of chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, who was just going over to Ireland; he was under-secretary also, but immediately on reaching Dublin he found himself dismissed from this post, and he resigned the chaplaincy as well. Early in 1700 he was given a group of livings and a prebend, the total revenues of all of which were sufficient for a single man to live upon in Ireland. He now finally broke off all relations with Varina, and came into closer connection with Stella, who had arrived at Dublin "with full resolution to engage him." Swift's duties now called him chiefly to his living of Laracor, in Meath, where he improved the house and garden, and even kept a curate, although the congregation was so small that it was here, having no audience but the clerk, that he opened the service with "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me." Five visits to London, covering in all some three years, broke up the monotony of Swift's Irish residence from 1700 to 1710. In 1704 he published, in a single anonymous volume, the *Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and some brief kindred treatises; and this introduced him to the London wits, of whom he was already intimately known to Congreve. His friendship with Addison and Steele dates from 1705, and under this stimulus he wrote *Baucis and Philemon* and the facetious Partridge tracts (1708). He saw his friends advance in the world, however, while he himself remained what he scornfully called a "hedge-parson." Already, since 1701, Swift had dabbled in politics, and had privately published, in the Whig interest, his brilliant *Discourse on the Dissensions in Athens and Rome.* After 1704 he found himself too high a churchman to applaud Whig measures without reserve. It was probably the uncertain note which he sounded in such tracts as the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, which stood in the way of his promotion; years passed and Swift got nothing, although in 1708 the bishopric of Waterford seemed within his reach. In 1709, after the failure of his negotiations to secure Queen Anne's Bounty for the Irish Church, Swift abandoned the Whigs altogether, and returned to Laracor to sulk. He stayed a year and a half "in one scurvy acre of ground," until the Whigs were turned out of office in August 1710. Swift hastened to London as soon as the news reached him, and he received civil attentions from the leaders of both parties. He was presented, "as a discontented person, who was ill-used for not being Whig enough," to the Tory leader, Harley, and was welcomed with flattering effusion. The *Journal to Stella* now begins, and for thirty months keeps us closely informed as to Swift's movements. Swift found himself "ten times better with the new people than he ever was with the old, and forty times more caressed." He began to write with vehement and effective wit in the Tory *Examiner.* His tract on the *Conduct of the Allies* may plausibly be conceived as having brought about the fall of Marlborough, and early in 1712 Swift was at the height of his political and personal prestige.

Esther Johnson ("Stella")

He used it with generous pertinacity for the advantage of his personal friends, and especially of men of letters; for himself he could do nothing. At last, in April 1713, Swift was appointed to be Dean of St. Patrick's; he saw he should get nothing better, and three months later, in great depression of spirits, he left for Dublin. The Tories wanted his pen, and presently called him back, but when in May 1714 he saw the quarrel between Harley (now Lord Oxford) and St. John (now Lord Bolingbroke) to be hopeless, he withdrew to a rectory in Berkshire, and wrote his brilliant pamphlet, *Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs*. But when Oxford fell in July, Swift refused to join Bolingbroke, nor was there much opportunity for doing so, since Queen Anne died and the Tories were "not so much ruined as annihilated." Swift, "like a man knocked down," hastened to Dublin. Here, for some years, he lived an extremely quiet life; "my amusements," he says, "are defending my small dominions against the archbishop, and endeavouring to reduce my rebellious choir."



Facsimile Page from Swift's Private Diary

He had pushed now to intimacy an acquaintance with Miss Hester Vanhomrigh, "Vanessa," whom he had slightly known since 1708; the longest of Swift's poems, the *Cadenus* [*Decanus*] *and Vanessa*, probably written in 1714, tells the story of this unfortunate relationship. But on reaching Dublin, the influence of Stella

immediately began to supplant that of Vanessa, although the latter followed Swift to Ireland. But he began a strange, indeed a perfectly inexplicable, double subterranean life between these two unhappy women. There was a legend, unconfirmed but undenied, that in 1716 he secretly married Stella; in 1723 Vanessa wrote to Stella to ask if this was true, and Swift, possessing himself of the letter, rode at once to Celbridge, where Vanessa lived, flung the letter on the table without a word, and rode away. Very shortly afterwards Vanessa, who never recovered from the shock, died. Stella lived on until January 1728. In an envelope Swift preserved a lock of her hair, writing outside "Only a woman's hair." All this business about Varina, Stella, and Vanessa is wholly mysterious; we know no more than what Archbishop King is said to have told Delany, that Swift "was the most unhappy man on earth, but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question." As early as 1717 he said to Young, "I shall die at the top," and he seems to have been always haunted by the fear of dying insane. To return to his public life, Swift was for six years silent both as an author and as a politician. In 1720 he published his earliest Irish pamphlet, an appeal to the people to consume none but Irish manufactures. This tract made a stir, but a far greater commotion was caused in 1724 by the publication of *The Drapier's Letters*, appealing with sarcastic vehemence against the proposed copper coinage of William Wood, a bankrupt hardwaresman; these are the most brilliant of Swift's polemical writings. Walpole sent Carteret over to Dublin to make a compromise and to punish the anonymous Drapier. Swift went to Carteret's levée, and mocked him for persecuting a poor tradesman; his own pseudonymity was preserved, Carteret failed, and the coinage of Wood was presented by the Grand Jury as a nuisance. This was the most brilliantly successful of Swift's political actions. He became the idol of Ireland, and when Walpole proposed to arrest him, he was told that a guard of 10,000 men would be needful to get him safe out of the country. Swift was now already sketching the most famous of his books, but it was not until late in 1726 that *Gulliver's Travels* was ready for the press; it was published under the pseudonym of Captain Lemuel Gulliver, and as if edited by "Richard Sympson," Lemuel's cousin. After the death of Stella, Swift's cynicism became more pronounced. To 1729 belongs *The Modest Proposal*, that the children of poor people in Ireland should be prevented from being a burden to their parents or country by being served up as food. In 1731 he wrote his amazing poem *On the Death of Dr. Swift.* In these and similar writings, in prose and verse, we see "the corruptions and villanies of men" eating into Swift's flesh and exhausting his spirit. He breathed in a dry furnace of irony and anger. In 1726 and 1727 he paid two short

Wood's Ha'pence

View of St. Patrick's Cathedral

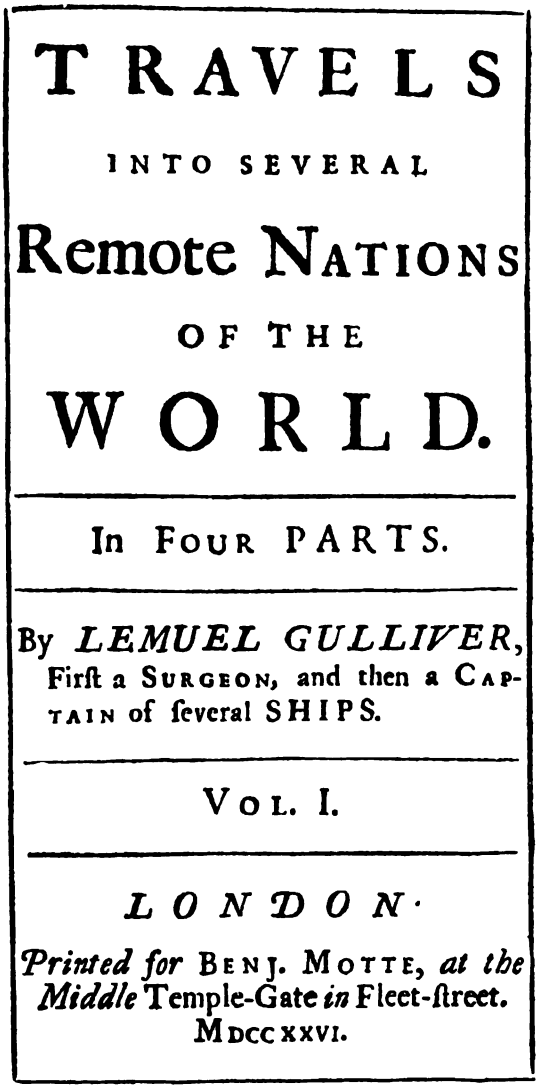
visits to England, and saw Pope for the last time. In 1728, after Stella died, he went to Market Hill, and was the guest of Sir Arthur Acheson for nearly a year, glad to escape from that "wretched, dirty dog-hole and prison," as he called Dublin. The finest of his poems, *On Poetry, a Rhapsody*, belongs to 1733, and many of the sardonic bagatelles of these late years of his life have been preserved. He was extremely unhappy, and attempted more and more to escape by sheer nonsense from the bondage of his intolerable depression of spirits. The latest of his important works show, in astonishing combination, an inanity of theme with unflagging splendour of wit and intellectual movement; these are *The Polite Conversation* and *Directions for Servants*, strangest monuments of a genius already in decay. These appear to have been finished in 1738, and after this he grew to be but the shadow of himself. His intellect steadily declined, and after 1740 was almost wholly eclipsed. He suffered from deep dejection, and occasionally from violent insanity, but "as a rule he enjoyed the painlessness of torpor." He died, after a long succession of convulsions, on the 19th of October 1745, and was buried in St. Patrick's, where an epitaph still tells us that his grave is a place where cruel indignation has no longer power to lacerate the heart. His character, person, and writings have ever since been the objects of a curiosity which shows no signs of being either satisfied or exhausted.

Engraved Frontispiece to "Gulliver's Travels"

FROM "A TALE OF A TUB."

I am now trying an experiment very frequent among modern authors, which is to write upon nothing; when the subject is utterly exhausted, to let the pen still move on: by some called the ghost of wit, delighting to walk after the death of its body. And to say the truth, there seems to be no part of knowledge in fewer hands than that of discerning when to have done. By the time that an author has written out a book he and his readers are become old acquaintance, and grow very loth to part; so that I have sometimes known it to be in writing as in visiting, where the ceremony of taking

leave has employed more time than the whole conversation before. The conclusion of a treatise resembles the conclusion of human life, which has sometimes been compared to the end of a feast, where few are satisfied to depart, *ut plenus vitæ conviva;* for men will sit down after the fullest meal, though it be only to doze or to sleep out the rest of the day. But in this latter I differ extremely from other writers; and shall be too proud if, by all my labours, I can have anyways contributed to the repose of mankind in times so turbulent and unquiet as these. Neither do I think such an employment so very alien from the office of a wit as some would suppose. For among a very polite nation in Greece, there were the same temples built and consecrated to Sleep and the Muses; between which two deities they believed the strictest friendship was established.

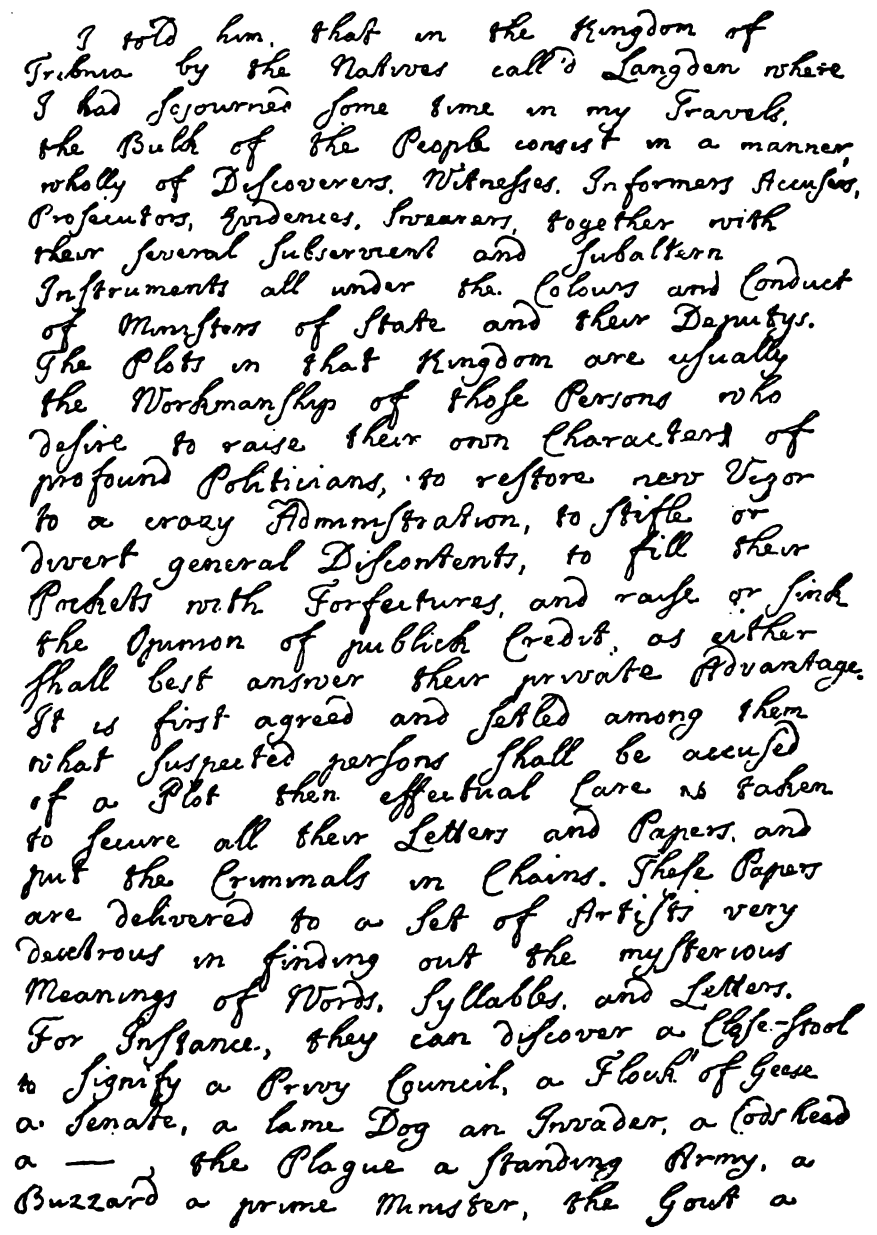

TRAVELS
INTO SEVERAL
Remote NATIONS
OF THE
WORLD.
In FOUR PARTS.
By *LEMUEL GULLIVER*,
First a SURGEON, and then a CAPTAIN of several SHIPS.
VOL. I.
LONDON:
Printed for BENJ. MOTTE, *at the Middle* Temple-Gate *in* Fleet-ſtreet.
MDCCXXVI.

Title-page of First Edition of "Gulliver's Travels"

FROM "THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS."

I am glad, answered the bee, to hear you grant at least that I am come honestly by my wings and my voice; for then, it seems, I am obliged to Heaven alone for my flights and my music; and Providence would never have bestowed on me two such gifts, without designing them for the noblest ends. I visit indeed all the flowers and blossoms of the field and garden; but whatever I collect thence enriches myself, without the least injury to their beauty, their smell, or their taste. Now, for you and your skill in architecture and other mathematics, I have little to say: in that building of yours there might, for aught I know, have been labour and method enough; but, by woeful experience for us both, it is too plain the materials are naught; and I hope you will henceforth take warning, and consider duration and matter, as well as method and art. You boast indeed of being obliged to no other creature, but of drawing and spinning out all from yourself; that is to say, if we may judge of the liquor in the vessel by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful store of dirt and poison in your breast; and, though I would by no means lessen or disparage your genuine stock of either, yet I doubt you are somewhat obliged, for an increase of both, to a little foreign assistance. Your inherent portion of dirt does not fail of acquisitions, by sweepings exhaled from below; and one insect furnishes you with a share of poison to destroy another. So that, in short, the question comes all to this; whether is the nobler being

of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into excrement and venom, pro-



A Page of the MS. of "Gulliver's Travels"

ducing nothing at all but flybane and a cobweb; or that which, by a universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax.

Essay on a Broomstick.

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest: it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs; but now, in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk: it is now, at best, but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and, by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean, and be nasty itself: at length, worn to the stumps in the service of the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use, of kindling a fire. When I beheld this I sighed, and said within myself, *Surely man is a broomstick!* Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk: he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs (all covered with powder), that never grew on his head; but now, should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellences and other men's defaults!

But a broomstick, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray what is man, but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth! and yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruption to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before; sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away; his last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till, worn out to the stumps, like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by.

Conversation.

Raillery is the finest part of conversation; but, as it is our usual custom to counterfeit and adulterate whatever is too dear for us, so we have done with this, and turned it all into what is generally called repartee, or being smart, just as when an expensive fashion comes up, those who are not able to reach it content themselves with some paltry imitation. It now passes for raillery to run a man down in discourse, to put him out of countenance, and make him ridiculous; sometimes to expose the defects of his person or understanding; on all which occasions, he is obliged not to be angry, to avoid the imputation of not being able to take a jest. It is admirable to observe one who is dexterous at this art, singling out a weak adversary, getting the laugh on his side, and then carrying all before him. The French, from whence we borrow the word, have a quite different idea of the thing, and so had we in the politer age of our fathers. Raillery was to say something that at first appeared a reproach or reflection, but, by some turn of wit, unexpected and surprising, ended always in a compliment, and to the advantage of the person it was addressed to. And surely one of the best rules in conversation is, never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid: nor can there anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves.

Swift declared that if the world had contained a dozen Arbuthnots *Gulliver's Travels* should have been burned. The charming physician was not only one of the very few persons whom Swift respected, but of his own generation the first to come completely under his literary influence.

If we take the lash out of the style of Swift, we have that of JOHN ARBUTHNOT, who can often hardly be distinguished from his friend and master. Without personal ambition of any kind, no vanity deterred Arbuthnot from frankly adopting, as closely as he could, the manner of the man whom he admired the most. As he was a perfectly sane and normal person, with plenty of wit and accomplishment, and without a touch of misanthropy, Arbuthnot served to popularise and to bring into general circulation the peculiar characteristics of Swift, and to reconcile him with his contemporaries.

John Arbuthnot (1667–1735)

John Arbuthnot (1667–1735) was born in April 1667, at Arbuthnot, in Kincardineshire; his father was a clergyman of the Episcopal Church. He was educated at Aberdeen, probably in Marischal College. At the Revolution, his father lost his preferment, and the family was broken up. Arbuthnot took his degree of bachelor of physic at St. Andrews, and came in 1691 to London. There he is said to have lodged with a woollen-draper, and to have taught mathematics for a living. In the autumn of 1694 he went, as a fellow-commoner, to University College, Oxford, where he stayed two years, but took his degree of M.D. in 1696, at St. Andrews. At Oxford he acted as private tutor to Edward Jeffreys, eldest son of Jeffrey Jeffreys, afterwards Sir Jeffrey; without some support of this kind he would have been too poor to go to Oxford. All Arbuthnot's early publications were on mathematical subjects, and he seems to have been but very slowly successful as a physician. He was so fortunate, however, as to be suddenly called in to attend Prince George of Denmark in a serious illness, and to treat him successfully. In consequence, Arbuthnot was, in October 1705, appointed Physician Extraordinary to Queen Anne, and he now rose steadily in emoluments and scientific reputation. About 1710 he began to move in the little circle of wits which moved around Pope, Gay, and Swift, and something in Arbuthnot's temper and character particularly recommended him to the last-mentioned. Hitherto Arbuthnot had been looked somewhat askance upon by the leaders of his own profession, but having in 1709 been made Physician in Ordinary to the Queen, he

John Arbuthnot
After the Portrait by Charles Jervas

was elected Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1710. It was in 1712 that, urged by Swift, Arbuthnot published the two anonymous tracts on which his fame as a satirical writer is mainly founded, *Law is a Bottomless Pit*, and *John Bull in his Senses*. These, with other treatises of the same year, were reprinted together as *The History of John Bull*, long attributed to Swift. Arbuthnot never admitted that the authorship was his, and we should still be in doubt, had not Swift happened to make an explicit statement on the subject when writing to Stella. To 1712 also belongs the *Pseudologia Politike*, or Art of Political Lying. Arbuthnot was one of the original members of the Scriblerus Club, and he was busily engaged on the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* when Queen Anne died. This event was a severe blow to Arbuthnot, and he went to Paris, in the hope, it would appear, of becoming physician to the young French king. In this he was disappointed, and reappeared in London, where he took a house in Dover Street, St. James's, and devoted himself to private practice. In 1717 he joined Pope and Gay in writing the comedy of *Three Hours after Marriage*. He went to France again in 1718. In 1727 he was appointed Harveian Orator. Arbuthnot suffered from chronic asthma, which gave him more and more persistent discomfort, and towards the end of his life he gave particular attention to the causes and the mitigation of this disease. In 1732 was printed, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, his sardonic epitaph on Colonel Charteris; this brilliant piece of invective, which was hugely admired, was said to "shine like the moon among the lesser fires" of wit in the age of Anne. In the hope of obtaining relief from his asthma and dropsy, Arbuthnot retired in 1734 to Hampstead, where he suffered so much that, in reply to an affectionate letter from Pope, he declared "the kindest wish of my friends is a euthanasia." He was taken back, for greater comfort, to his house in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, where he died on the 27th of February 1735, and was buried in St. James's Church, Piccadilly. The writings of Arbuthnot were cast forth so carelessly, and, with unimportant exceptions, with so little indication of authorship, that he is perhaps of all eminent English writers the one about whose bibliography the greatest obscurity prevails.

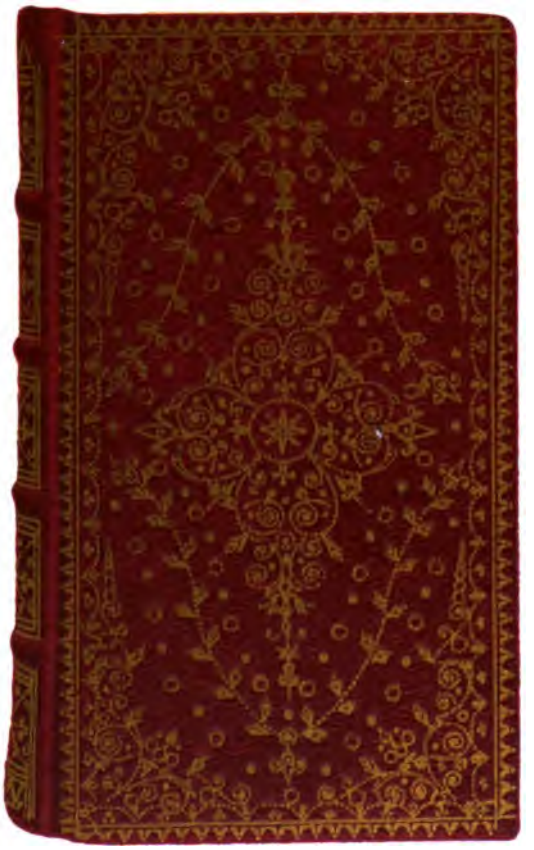
England and Scotland.

John [Bull] had a sister, a poor girl that had been starved at nurse; anybody would have guessed Miss to have been bred up under the influence of a cruel step-dame and John to be the fondling of a tender mother. John looked ruddy and plump, with a pair of cheeks like a trumpeter; Miss looked pale and wan, as if she had the green-sickness; and no wonder, for John was the darling, he had all the good bits, was crammed with good pullet, chicken, pig, goose and capon; while Miss had only a little oatmeal and water, or a dry crust without butter. John had his golden pippins, peaches and nectarines; poor Miss a crab-apple, sloe, or a blackberry. Master lay in the best apartment, with his bed-chamber toward the south sun. Miss lodged in a garret exposed to the north wind, which shrivelled her countenance; however, this usage, tho' it stunted the girl in her growth, gave her a hardy constitution; she had life and spirit in abundance, and knew when she was ill-used: now and then she would seize upon John's commons, snatch a leg of a pullet, or a bit of good beef, for which they were sure to go to fisticuffs. Master was indeed too strong for her, but Miss would not yield in the least point, but even when Master got her down, she would scratch and bite like a tiger; when he gave her a cuff on the ear, she would prick him with her knitting-needle.

Swift would have been well content to be named with Arbuthnot, but to find Mandeville's works bracketed with his own would have given him a paroxysm of indignation. Yet they were really so closely allied in some essentials of thought that it is natural to regard them together. BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE was a misanthropical Dutch doctor settled in London, who attacked the optimism of Shaftesbury in a coarse but highly effective and readable volume called *The Fable of the Bees*. For twenty years after this he was a pariah of the English press, writing odious, vulgar, extremely intelligent books, in which he extended his paradoxical thesis that private vices are public benefits. Mandeville was a daring thinker, who permitted no traditional prejudice, no habit of decency, to interfere with the progression of his ideas. He was by far the ablest of the English deists, and though all the respectability of his time drew away from him, and, like the Grand Jury of Middlesex, voted him a public nuisance, he was not without his very distinct influence on the progress of English literature. He was an emancipator of thought, a rude and contemptuous critic of the conventions. In himself base and ugly—for all his writings reveal a gross individuality—the brute courage of Mandeville helped English speculation to slip from its fetters. His style is without elegance, but, what is strange in a foreigner, of a remarkable homeliness and picturesque vigour.

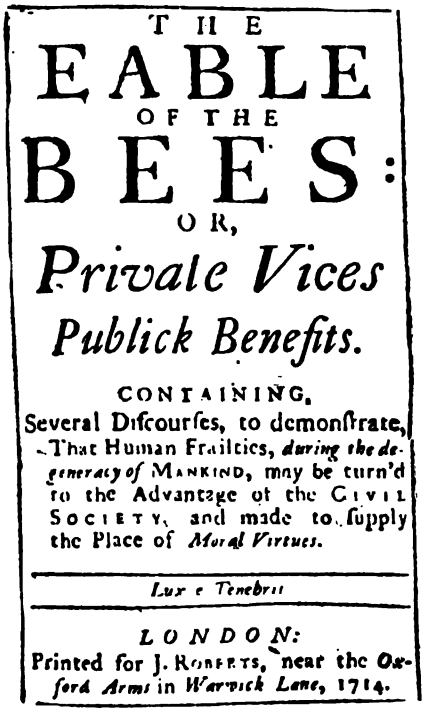
Bernard de Mandeville (1669?–1733)

Bernard de Mandeville (1669?–1733) was the son of a Dutch doctor, Michael de Mandeville, and was born at Dortrecht, as is supposed, in 1669. His father was a successful practitioner in Rotterdam, and Bernard was educated there; he left the Erasmus School for the University in the autumn of 1685. He took his degree as a physician at Leyden in 1691. We hear nothing more of him for fourteen years, when he appears in London, writing English with complete fluency, and publishing a poem, *The Grumbling Hive*, in which the nucleus of Mandeville's philosophy is already discovered. He must have come over to London to make his fortune, and he received a pension from certain Dutch merchants, probably in the spirit trade, for he is said to have been "hired by the distillers." With these obscure dealings in the liquor business he combined the practice of a doctor, but never achieved much success. In 1714 he republished his poem, with a very full commentary, called *An Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, and notes; and styled the whole thing *The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices Public Benefits*. Little notice was taken, until, in 1723, what was practically a third edition appeared, much enlarged, with an essay on charity schools. The public now woke up to the insidious attacks of the Dutch doctor, and to his cynical system of utilitarian immorality. The Grand Jury of Middlesex presented the book as a nuisance, and it was attacked in the press and the pulpit. *The Fable of the Bees* enjoyed the compliment of refutation on all sides, and among those who devoted serious pains to the composition of replies were no less persons than Berkeley, Hutcheson, Law, and Dennis. Mandeville, in the zeal of disputation, said that he would destroy his book if it were proved to be immoral, and there was circulated a story to the effect that he did solemnly burn



SPECIMEN OF ENGLISH BINDING, 1727.

it on a bonfire before St. James's Palace in 1728. He denied this tale with indignation, and *The Fable of the Bees*, in spite of (or on account of) the countless attacks which were made against it, was steadily reprinted for half a century. The heresies of Mandeville were plausible, and were put forward in a bold, attractive form. He believed that extravagant private expenditure led to private wealth, and that the spendthrift was a benefactor. He thought that the "private vices" of mankind, the indulgence of evil desires, was of general advantage to the world. Whether in arguing that virtue was a mere fallacy, and that human nature was hopelessly and radically bad, Mandeville was partly serious, or was wholly enjoying the jest of mocking at the optimism of Shaftesbury, is uncertain. He was certainly a coarse, clear-eyed person, of great acumen and no delicacy, who saw, faintly and imperfectly, many of the discoveries of later science, which were not dreamed of by his contemporaries. It is remarkable that while all decent people still affected to be shocked by the immoral paradoxes of Mandeville, Dr. Johnson had the candour to admit that *The Fable of the Bees* had "opened his views into real life very much." Johnson also admired a medical treatise of Mandeville's on hypochondria, which appeared first in 1711, and was often reprinted. In 1725 the Dutch doctor published an *Inquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions in Tyburn*, a very picturesque volume, the best written of his works. Some of the books he published were of a class which gave his enemies juster occasion for scandal than *The Fable of the Bees*, but he was left untroubled. Franklin, when he came to England in 1724, found Mandeville the "soul" of a tavern club, and describes him as "a most entertaining, facetious companion." Lord Macclesfield enjoyed his conversation, which was apparently of the same paradoxical character as his writings. Why Mandeville came to England, and how he learned to write English with such perfect mastery, will probably never be known. No portrait of him is supposed to exist.


THE
FABLE
OF THE
BEES:
OR,
Private Vices
Publick Benefits.
CONTAINING,
Several Diſcourſes, to demonſtrate,
That Human Frailties, *during the degeneracy of* MANKIND, may be turn'd to the Advantage of the CIVIL SOCIETY, and made to ſupply the Place of *Moral Virtues.*
Lux e Tenebris
LONDON:
Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick Lane*, 1714.

Title-page of Bernard Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees"

If the great ones of the clergy, as well as the laity, of any country whatever had no value for earthly pleasures, and did not endeavour to gratify their appetites, why are envy and revenge so raging among them, and all the other passions improved and refined upon in courts of princes more than anywhere else; and why are their repasts, their recreations, and whole manner of living, always such as are approved of, coveted, and imitated by the most sensual people of the same country? If despising all visible decorations, they were only in love with the embellishments of the mind, why should they borrow so many of the implements, and make use of the most darling toys, of the luxurious? Why should a lord treasurer, or a bishop, or even a Grand Signior, or the Pope of Rome, to be good and virtuous, and endeavour

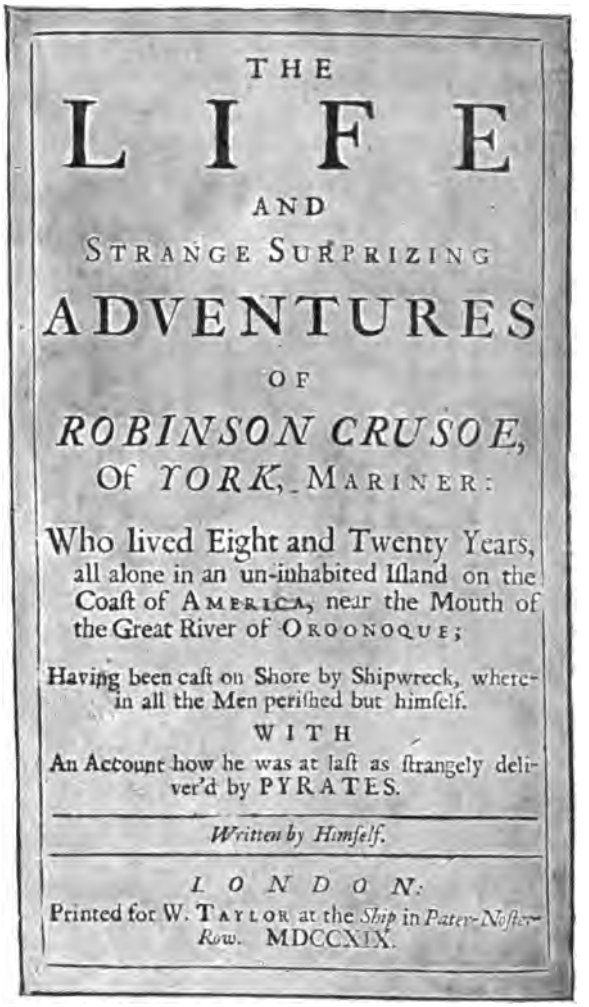
the conquest of his passions, have occasion for greater revenues, richer furniture, or a more numerous attendance as to personal service, than a private man? What virtue is it the exercise of which requires so much pomp and superfluity as are to be seen by all men in power? A man has as much opportunity to practise temperance that has but one dish at a meal, as he that is constantly served with three courses and a dozen dishes in each. One may exercise as much patience and be as full of self-denial on a few flocks, without curtains or tester, as in a velvet bed that is sixteen foot high. The virtuous possessions of the mind are neither charge nor burden: a man may bear misfortunes with fortitude in a garret, forgive injuries afoot, and be chaste, though he has not a shirt to his back; and therefore I shall never believe but that an indifferent skulker, if he was entrusted with it, might carry all the learning and religion that one man can contain, as well as a barge with six oars, especially if it was but to cross from Lambeth to Westminster; or that humility is so ponderous a virtue that it requires six horses to draw it.

Another writer who was kept outside the sacred ring of the Anne wits was DANIEL DEFOE, who comes in certain aspects close to Mandeville, but has a far wider range and variety. Several dissimilar writers are combined in Defoe, all, with one exception, of a pedestrian and common-place character. He was in his earlier years the very type of what was called "a hackney author," that is to say, a man of more skill than principle, who let out his pen for hire, ready at his best to support the Ministry with a pamphlet, at his worst to copy documents for stationers or lawyers. In these multifarious exercises Defoe was as copious as any journalist of our own time, and for a quarter of a century had a very large share in the miscellaneous writing of the day. The literary character which these humdrum productions illustrate seems to have been far from fascinating. All that we can praise in this Defoe of the pamphlets and journals is industry and a sort of lucid versatility. He was a factor in the vulgarisation of English, and he helped, in no small measure, to create a correct, easy, not ungraceful style for common use in the eighteenth century.

Daniel Defoe

But as he approached the age of sixty, Defoe suddenly appeared in a new light, as the inaugurator of a new school of English prose fiction.

In 1719 he published the immortal romance of *Robinson Crusoe*. Everything which had been written earlier than this in the form of an English novel faded at once into insignificance before the admirable sincerity and reality of this relation. It is difficult to conjecture what it was that suggested to the veteran drudge this extraordinary departure, so perfectly fresh, spirited, and novel. The idea of the European sailor marooned on an oceanic island had been used in 1713 by Marivaux in his novel of *Les Effets Surprenants*, but there is no further similarity of treatment. In his later picaresque romances Defoe is manifestly influenced by Le Sage, but *Robinson Crusoe* can scarcely be traced to French or Spanish models. It was an invention, a great, unexpected stroke of British genius, and it was immediately hailed as such by the rest of Europe. It was one of the first English books which was widely imitated on the Continent, and it gave direction and impetus to the new romantico-realistic conception of fiction all over the world. The French, indeed, followed Defoe more directly than the English themselves, and his most obvious disciples are Prévost, Rousseau, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. It was in his *Émile*, where he prefers Defoe as an educator to Aristotle, Pliny, or Buffon, that Rousseau finally drew the full admiration of Europe upon *Robinson Crusoe*. In England, however, the bourgeois romances of Defoe long remained without influence and without prestige, widely read indeed, but almost furtively, as vulgar literature fit for the kitchen and the shop.


THE
LIFE
AND
STRANGE SURPRIZING
ADVENTURES
OF
ROBINSON CRUSOE,
Of *YORK*, MARINER:
Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Iſland on the Coaſt of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River of OROONOQUE;
Having been caſt on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men periſhed but himſelf.
WITH
An Account how he was at laſt as ſtrangely deliver'd by PYRATES.
Written by Himſelf.
LONDON:
Printed for W. TAYLOR at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*. MDCCXIX.

Title-page of "Robinson Crusoe." First Edition, 1719

Daniel Foe, who called himself in later life **Defoe** (1661–1731), was the son of a Northamptonshire butcher, of the name of Foe, settled at the time of the writer's

Daniel Defoe (1661–1731)

birth, in St. Giles', Cripplegate. The butcher was a dissenter, and intended his son for the ministry; he seems to have been at a Nonconformist training college on Newington Green from 1675 to 1680. He gave up the idea of becoming a minister, but his career is vague to us until 1685, when we find him engaged in the wholesale hosiery business in a court leading out of Cornhill. He went abroad occasionally, sometimes certainly to Spain; but his trade failed, and in 1692, being bankrupt, he had to fly his creditors. About this time he seems to have published the earliest of his innumerable pamphlets. We hear of him at Bristol, where he was called "The Sunday Gentleman," because he dared not face the bailiffs on week-days; and the next thing is that, for no apparent reason, he is appointed, in 1694, Accountant to the Glass Commissioners. This enabled him, perhaps, to pay his debts, and he started a factory for bricks and pantiles at Tilbury, which for a while was highly successful. Defoe now kept a coach and a private yacht. His post under Government was probably a mere decoy for the work of a mercenary journalist, and we find Defoe beginning to use his active pen in the King's service. It was probably under direction from the court that he now separated from the Nonconformists in his *Occasional Conformity* of 1698. In the year 1701 he first adopted the surname Defoe, and engaged with fervour in a national, royal, and Protestant propaganda. His first great popular success was with the rough and daring satire in verse, *The True-Born Englishman*, in which he hammered into his countrymen some hard facts. This "poem" sold to the amount of 80,000 copies, and Defoe was presented to the King. He was now, at the age of forty, a famous man, or at least a very popular one, but the death of William III. in 1702 was unfortunate for him. He wrote recklessly and vaguely, in prose and verse, and at last he scandalised all parties by his grotesque and ironical *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1703). Defoe fled, but presently determined to surrender; he was found guilty of seditious libel, and had his famous experience of the pillory. Pope, however, was not warranted in saying that Defoe stood "earless" or "unabashed," and the populace flung posies of flowers about him and drank enthusiastically in his honour at the foot of the pillory. He was taken to Newgate Prison, where he lay until the following summer, when he was released to be used for secret service by the Government. While he was imprisoned, he wrote as usual incessantly, and published a very remarkable newspaper, the *Review*, of which he wrote the whole himself; under several forms, this influential periodical continued to appear until 1715, all the time supporting whatever Ministry "Her Majesty was pleased to employ." All

Defoe's House at Stoke Newington

I am Sorry there Should be any Manner of Room for an Objection when We are to hear a Conclusion of an Affair like This. I Should be very Uneasie when I give you a Gift So much Value and Hope I do not Over Rate Her Neither) There Should be any Reserve among us, there Should Leave y^e least Room for Unkindness, or So much as thinking of Unkindness, no not So much as the Word

But there is a Family Reason why I am Tyed down to y^e Words of Your Letter, and I can not Think m^r Baker Should Dispute So small a Matter w^th me, after I Told him So (Viz) that I am So Tyed Down: I can I believe many Ways make him up the Little Sum of Five Pound a year, and when I Tell you This under my Hand, then I Shall Think my Self Oblig'd to do it Instantly Else Shall add that I Shall Think my Self more Oblig'd to do So, than if you had it under Hand and Seal

But if you are not willing to Trust me on my Parole for So Small a Sum and that According To the Great Treaty abroad, there must Be a Clause Article in Our Negotiation: I Say if it must be So, I would fain put my Self in a Condition to Deny you Nothing, w^ch you can ask, Believing you will ask nothing of me w^ch I ought to Deny.

When you Speak of a child's Fortune, w^ch I own you do very Modestly; you must give me leave to Say Only this, you must accept of Her in Bar of any Claim from Her City Customes; and I Doubt you will Have Due Too much Reason, Seeing I Sadly Hope to do Equally for all my Sons, as I Shall for my Dear Sophie. But after that you Shall Onely allow me to Say, and that you Shall Depend upon, what Ever it Shall please God to Bless me with, None Shall Have a Greater Share in it, and you need no more than Remember, That She is, Ever was and Ever will be My Dearest and Best Beloved. and let me add again I Hope you will Take it for a Mark of my Single and affectionate Concern for you, That I Thus give Her you, and That I Say Too I Should you Her much more it Should be to you, w^th the Same affection

Sir
Your most Obedient Humble Servant
Daniel Defoe

Aug^st 27^th 1728.

Letter from Defoe

the central portion of Defoe's life has little relation to literature, and is so excessively obscure that there was no thread to guide the investigator through it, until Mr. William Lee published the result of his exhaustive researches in 1869. It is now known that Defoe did not withdraw from journalism in 1715, as was long supposed, but continued to edit and contribute to newspapers until 1726. In many ways Defoe may justly be considered as the founder of modern journalism, in its good as well as in its bad features. In the course of catering for his newspapers, Defoe interviewed with impartiality a surprising variety of persons, and became familiar with their modes of life and language; he thus prepared himself for his later and far more important work as an author. As early as 1706, in *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, he wove reality into a kind of naturalistic fiction. But his boldest and more original work in this line was not begun until he was approaching his sixtieth year. In 1719 Defoe published his celebrated romance of *Robinson Crusoe*, the first of its class in English literature. This was founded on a report of the adventures of a certain Alexander Selkirk (or Selcraig), who had been marooned on Juan Fernandez. The instant success of this wonderful book revealed to Defoe the fact that he had struck, as by accident, on a rich lode of gold. Perhaps he had already composed otner stories of this kind, for the almost simultaneous appearance of three such long novels as *Mr. Duncan Campbell*, *Captain Singleton*, and (perhaps) *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, all printed in 1720, is hardly to be accounted for except on the theory that the MSS. of them were already partly in existence when *Robinson Crusoe* became famous. These novels of Defoe's old age continued to appear with startling rapidity; before the end of 1722, *Moll Flanders*, *The Plague Year*, and *Colonel Jack* were added to the list. *Roxana*, the latest of his important romances, belongs to 1724. An innate vulgarity curiously characteristic, for all its genius, of the mind of Defoe, appears unabashed in his doubtless ironical *Complete English Tradesman* of 1725–7,

Illustration to "Robinson Crusoe"

which had a very considerable influence on its multitude of readers, but the bent of which, as Charles Lamb has justly said, is "to narrow and to degrade the heart." The composition of all these books was very lucrative, and Defoe retired to Newington, then a rural village, and built himself there a handsome house. Here he cultivated a large garden, wrote and studied, and enjoyed the society of "three lovely daughters." He had two sons, who were not quite satisfactory. The second of these sons seems to have borne some part in the painful exposure of Defoe, which occurred in 1726, when his connection with the Government, which had been kept absolutely dark from even his closest associates, became known. Defoe was much attacked, and probably suffered even in his pocket; "the old man cannot trouble you long," he meekly responded. In 1729, it is impossible to tell why, he had to disappear from his house in Newington, and hid himself in the neighbourhood of Greenwich, holding mysterious intercourse with his family. He complained of "a perjured, contemptible enemy," and he transferred his Newington estate to another name. He was, in all probability, still hiding from real or imaginary foes when death found him, on the 26th of April 1731, in a lodging in Ropemakers' Alley, Moorfields. It has been suggested, as a conjectural explanation of all this mystery, that he had become the victim of senile and insane delusions.

Illustration by Thomas Stothard to "Robinson Crusoe"

FROM "ROBINSON CRUSOE."

During the long time that Friday has now been with me, and that he began to speak to me, and understand me, I was not wanting to lay a foundation of religious knowledge in his mind; particularly I asked him one time who made him? The poor creature did not understand me at all, but thought I had asked who was his father; but I took it by another handle, and asked him who made the sea, the ground we walked on, and the hills, and woods; he told me it was one Old

Benamuckee, that lived beyond all. He could describe nothing of this great person, but that he was very old; much older, he said, than the sea, or the land; than the moon, or the stars: I asked him then, if this old person had made all things, why did not all things worship him; he looked very grave, and with a perfect look of innocence, said, "All things do say O to him." I asked him if the people who die in his country went away anywhere; he said yes, they all went to Benamuckee; then I asked him whether these they eat up went thither too, he said yes.

From these things, I began to instruct him in the knowledge of the true God: I told him that the great Maker of all things lived up there, pointing up towards heaven; that He governs the world by the same power and providence by which He had made it; that He was omnipotent, could do everything for us, give everything to us, take everything from us; and thus by degrees I opened his eyes. He listened with great attention, and received with pleasure the notion of Jesus Christ being sent to redeem us, and of the manner of making our prayers to God, and His being able to hear us, even into heaven; he told me one day, that if our God could hear us up beyond the sun, He must needs be a greater God than their Benamuckee, who lived but a little way off, and yet could not hear till they went up to the great mountains where he dwelt, to speak to him. I asked him if ever he went thither to speak to him; he said no, they never went that were young men; none went thither but the old men, whom he called their Oowocakee, that is, as I made him explain it to me, their religious or clergy, and that they went to say O (so he called saying prayers), and then came back, and told them what Benamuckee said; by this I observed, that there is priestcraft, even amongst the most blinded ignorant

House where Defoe met Selkirk

From Wright's "Life of Defoe"

Pagans in the world; and the policy of making a secret religion, in order to preserve the veneration of the people to the clergy, is not only to be found in the Roman, but perhaps among all religions in the world, even among the most brutish and barbarous savages.

With Defoe and Mandeville we have strayed outside the inner circle of Queen Anne wits. We return to its centre in speaking of Bolingbroke and Berkeley. With the progress of criticism, however, the relative value of these two typical eighteenth-century names is being slowly but decisively reversed. The fame of BOLINGBROKE, once so universal, has dwindled to a mere shadow. He lives as an individual, not any longer as a writer. His diffuse and pompous contributions to theistical philosophy are now of interest mainly as exemplifying several of the faults of decaying classicism—its empty rhetoric, its vapid diction, its slipshod, inconsistent reasoning. In fact, if Bolingbroke demands mention here, it is mainly as a dreadful example, as the earliest author in which the school which culminated in Pope, Addison, and Swift is seen to have passed its meridian and to be declining. The cardinal defect of classicism was to be its tendency to hollowness, to intellectual insincerity and partisanship, and this defect is so clearly exposed in Bolingbroke that we read him no longer.

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke
After the Portrait by Rigaud

Henry St. John (1678–1751)

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), was the son of Sir Henry St. John and of his wife, a daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and was born in London in October 1678. He was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford; he married at the age of twenty-two, entered Parliament, and was Secretary for War at twenty-six. He was raised to the peerage in 1712, and in 1714 threw in his lot with the Pretender. It was not until 1723 that he made peace with the English court and resumed political life. Most of his later life was spent in France. Bolingbroke died in London on the 12th of

December 1751. His literary life is of insignificant interest in comparison with the record of his political adventures. His *Dissertation on Parties* appeared in book-form in 1735, and the famous *Letter to Sir William Wyndham*, originally written in 1716, was posthumous, 1753. *The Idea of a Patriot King* bears no date, but was probably issued in 1735.

The opposite fate has rewarded the clear and starry genius of GEORGE BERKELEY. In his own day respected, but not highly regarded as a writer, he has gradually so strengthened his hold upon us by the purity of his taste, that in an age of predominance in prose we regard him as a master. In spite of Shaftesbury, Berkeley is the greatest English thinker between Locke and Hume, and as a pure metaphysician he is perhaps without a rival. His person and his character were as charming as his genius, and when he came up to London for the first time in 1713 he conquered all hearts. Pope expressed everybody's conviction when he declared that there had been given "to Berkeley every virtue under heaven." He had at that time already circulated his curious hypothesis of phenomenalism, his theory that what we see and touch is only a symbol of what is spiritual and eternal—that nothing is, but only seems to be. His writings, long pondered and slowly produced, culminated in 1744 in the brilliant and paradoxical treatise on the merits of tar-water, which was afterwards called *Siris*.

George Berkeley

After the Portrait by John Smibert

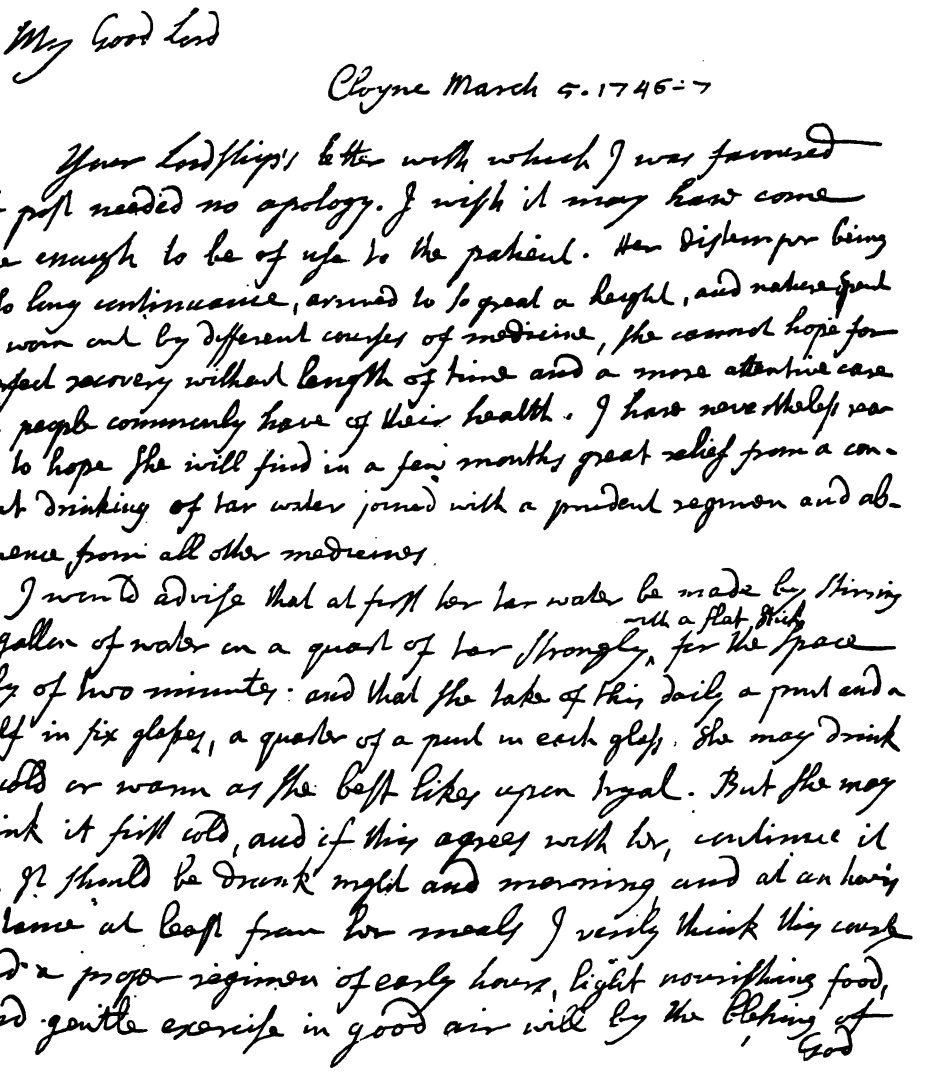
Locke had almost removed philosophy outside the confines of literature; Shaftesbury had shown that the philosopher could be elegant, florid, and illustrative; it remained for Berkeley to place it for a moment

on the level of poetry itself. There had, perhaps, been written in English no prose so polished as that of Berkeley. Without languor or insipidity, with a species of quiet, unstrained majesty, Berkeley achieved the summit of a classic style. No student of the age of Anne should fail to study that little volume of dialogues which Berkeley issued under the title of *Hylas and Philonous*. It belongs to the *annus mirabilis* 1713, when Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, were all at the brilliant apex of their genius, and when England had suddenly combined to present such a galaxy of literary talent as was to be matched. or even approached, nowhere on the Continent of Europe.

George Berkeley (1685–1753)

George Berkeley (1685–1753) was the son of William Berkeley, of Thomastown in County Kilkenny, where he was born on the 12th of March 1685. When he was eleven years of age, he was sent to the famous grammar-school of Kilkenny, and four years later (March 1700) he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He distinguished himself in his studies, particularly in Greek, mathematics, and metaphysics, and in 1707 was elected fellow and tutor of his college. His earliest technical works belong to the same year. Berkeley now took holy orders. As early as 1705, and apparently without external influence of any kind, he had developed his famous theory of the non-existence of matter, and in 1709 he attempted to expound it in his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision;* this was followed in 1710 by the *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. He pushed his metaphysical refinements still further in his *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in which he expressly asserts that the external existence of matter cannot be proved by all our senses united. He came to England in January 1713 for the purpose of printing this book, and was warmly welcomed in London literary society, his avowed object being "to make acquaintance with men of merit, rather than to engage the interests of those in power." He became the close friend of Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Steele, and arrived in time to sit in Addison's box at the first performance of *Cato*. Everybody was charmed with Berkeley, and even Atterbury, from whom compliments were not easily wrung, said that "so much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman." After some brilliant months in London, Berkeley was recommended by Swift to the Earl of Peterborough, who took him as chaplain on his embassy to the King of Sicily in November 1713. He spent ten months in Italy and France, and after a while passed in London, spent his time mainly in Italy until 1720. During these years he published nothing; but in 1721, after the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, he issued an appeal for moderate expenditure and simplicity of life, called *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*. He went back to Dublin, being made lecturer in Divinity and in Greek to his college, and chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant. In 1723 he was lifted above financial anxiety by the sum of £4000 being left him by Swift's "Vanessa," who, however, had never spoken to Berkeley. In May 1724 he received a fresh addition to his fortune in the rich deanery of Derry. But no sooner was Berkeley settled there than he began to form the project of founding a missionary college in the Bermudas, for the purpose of

training young clergymen to evangelise America. Swift, who took a somewhat cynical view of the matter, nevertheless commended it for Berkeley's sake to Carteret, saying, "I entreat you either to keep one of the first men in this kingdom quiet at home, or else assist him to compass his romantic design, which is



My Good Lord

Cloyne March 5. 1746-7

Your Lordship's letter with which I was favoured last post needed no apology. I wish it may have come time enough to be of use to the patient. Her distemper being of so long continuance, arrived to so great a height, and nature spent and worn out by different courses of medicine, she cannot hope for a perfect recovery without length of time and a more attentive care than people commonly have of their health. I have nevertheless reason to hope she will find in a few months great relief from a constant drinking of tar water joined with a prudent regimen and abstinence from all other medicines.

I would advise that at first her tar water be made by stirring with a flat stick a gallon of water on a quart of tar strongly, for the space only of two minutes: and that the take of this daily a pint and a half in six glasses, a quarter of a pint in each glass. She may drink it cold or warm as she best likes upon trial. But she may drink it first cold, and if this agrees with her, continue it so. It should be drunk mid and morning and at an hour's distance at least from her meals. I verily think this cough and a proper regimen of early hours, light nourishing food, and gentle exercise in good air will by the blessing of God

Extract from a Letter of George Berkeley's

very noble and generous." The members of the Scriblerus Club were called together to dine with Lord Bathurst, for the purpose of rallying Berkeley out of his project, but he listened quietly to their jokes and then laid his plans before them with such astonishing force of enthusiasm, that the wits stood up together and exclaimed, "Let us all set out with him immediately!" In June 1725 Berkeley contrived to get from the Government a charter for his college, and

published a *Proposal.* His ideas were accepted in London with extraordinary zeal, and a vote of £20,000 to endow the missionary university was carried with acclamation through both Houses of Parliament. It was not, however, until September 1728, that, having married a month before, Berkeley set sail for America, and then, not for Bermuda, but Rhode Island. Sir Robert Walpole, however, was determined to wreck the scheme, and from information received from the Treasury, the Bishop of London recommended Berkeley to return in 1731. He had resigned his deanery, but on the written understanding that the deed should not take force until after the Government had paid the grant of £20,000; he was therefore able to return to Derry. In 1733 Berkeley was made Bishop of Cloyne, having returned the year before to literature, by the publication of his *Alciphron*, the largest of his works, which he had composed in Rhode Island. He lived at Cloyne from 1734 to 1752, although in 1745 he was offered the much more valuable diocese of Clogher. He set up in the palace at Cloyne a distillery of tar-water, a medicine which had long attracted him, because he conceived it to have the anti-materialistic quality of being charged with "pure invisible fire, the most subtle and elastic of bodies." Accordingly, in 1744, Berkeley published his *Chain of Philosophical Reflections concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water*, to which, in the second and all subsequent editions, was given the more convenient title of *Siris.* This extraordinary work has been more read than any other of its author's writings, and exhibits in perfection the admirable beauty of his style. It was expanded by *Farther Thoughts on Tar-Water* in 1752. In the summer of that year Berkeley seems to have grown tired of his long exile at Cloyne, and asked George II. to permit him to resign. The King replied that he might reside wherever he liked, but that live and die a Bishop he should. Berkeley, therefore, in the summer of 1752, found occasion in his son George's proceeding to Oxford as a student of Christ Church, to settle near him, and he took a house in Holywell Street. But his residence there was short, for on the evening of Sunday, January 14, 1753, appearing to have never been in better health, and having just expounded a chapter of the first Corinthians to his family, Berkeley withdrew to the sofa for a nap, from which he never awakened. He was buried in the cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford. It was not Pope alone, but all his contemporaries, who attributed "to Berkeley every virtue under heaven." No one, in that age of plain speaking, had a word to say to his disadvantage. His beauty of person, his grace of manner, his kindliness, his unselfishness, his intelligence, his simplicity are celebrated by all who knew him; even Voltaire was impressed with his goodness of heart, and in Swift's eyes he was the one "absolute philosopher." As one of his clergy said, "If ever there lived a Christian, it was Dr. Berkeley."

> I desire it may be considered that most men want leisure, opportunity, or faculties, to derive conclusions from their principles, and establish morality on a foundation of human science. True it is—as St. Paul observes—that the "invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen;" and from thence the duties of natural religion may be discovered. But these things are seen and discovered by those alone who open their eyes and look narrowly for them. Now, if you look throughout the world, you shall find but few of these narrow inspectors and inquirers, very few who make it their business to analyse opinions, and pursue them to their rational source, to examine whence truths spring, and how they are inferred. In short, you shall find all men full of opinions, but knowledge only in a few.

It is impossible, from the nature and circumstances of humankind, that the multitude should be philosophers, or that they should know things in their causes. We see every day that the rules, or conclusions alone, are sufficient for the shopkeeper to state his account, the sailor to navigate his ship, or the carpenter to measure his timber; none of which understand the theory, that is to say, the grounds and reasons either of arithmetic or geometry. Even so in moral, political, and religious matters, it is manifest that the rules and opinions early imbibed at the first dawn of understanding, and without the least glimpse of science, may yet produce excellent effects, and be very useful to the world; and that, in fact, they are so, will be very visible to every one who shall observe what passeth round about him.

The Spirit of Plants.

The balsam or essential oil of vegetables contains a spirit, wherein consist the specific qualities, the smell and taste of the plant. Boerhave holds the native presiding spirit to be neither oil, salt, earth, nor water, but somewhat too fine and subtle to be caught alone and rendered visible to the eye. This, when suffered to fly off, for instance, from the oil of rosemary, leaves it destitute of all flavour. This spark of life, this spirit or soul, if we may so say, of the vegetable, departs without any sensible diminution of the oil or water wherein it was lodged.

It should seem that the forms, souls, or principles of vegetable life subsist in the light or solar emanation, which in respect to the macrocosm is what the a imal spirit is to the microcosm—the interior tegument, the subtle instrument and vehicle of power. No wonder, then, that the *ens primum* or *scintilla spirituosa*, as it is called, of plants should be a thing so fine and fugacious as to escape our nicest search. It is evident that nature at the sun's approach vegetates, and languishes at his recess; this terrestrial globe seeming only a matrix disposed and prepared to receive life from his light. . . . The luminous spark which is the form or life of a plant, from whence its differences and properties flow, is somewhat extremely volatile.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

After the Portrait by F. Zincke

The most prominent woman-writer of the first half of the eighteenth century was **Lady Mary Pierrepont** (1689–1762), daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, afterwards Duke of Kingston, who was born in lodgings in Covent Garden, on the 26th May 1689, and who married Edward Wortley Montagu in 1712. By means of her husband, who was much older than she, Lady Mary was introduced to Addison, Congreve, and Steele, and her earliest writings were suppressed by the advice of the first-named. She persevered, however, and in 1716 her *Court Poems* were privately and anonymously printed. In that year she left England with her husband, and remained in Vienna and Constantinople until the autumn of 1718; her letters during this period were of high value and interest. Returning to London, she made the personal acquaintance of Pope, with whom she

had been in correspondence. A violent friendship sprang up between them and blazed for awhile, but had died down when, about 1723, it ended in a great explosion of mutual rage and ill-breeding. In 1739 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu left her husband under circumstances which have never been lucidly explained, and was a resident abroad, mainly in Italy, for the next twenty-two years. She was in Venice in 1761 when the news of her husband's death reached her; she was in poor health, but she determined to return to England to settle his estate. She arrived in January 1762, and did not return, but died in her house in Montagu Square on the 21st August 1762. She is remarkable for having introduced into western Europe the practice of inoculation for small-pox, which she tried first on her own son, Edward, at Constantinople in 1715. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a woman of a fiery spirit, penetrated with literature and curiosity, ardent and unabashed, insolent and generous. Her letters, which have neither the tenderness nor the eloquence of a Sevigné, testify to the ripeness of her judgment and the clearness of her eye.

FROM A LETTER FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

The climate is delightful in the extremest degree. I am now sitting, this present fourth of January [1718], with the windows open, enjoying the warm shine of the sun, while you are freezing over a sad sea-coal fire; and my chamber set out with carnations, roses and jonquils, fresh from my garden. I am also charmed with many points of the Turkish law, to our shame, be it spoken, better designed and better executed than ours; particularly the punishment of convicted liars (triumphant criminals in our country, God knows!) They are burnt in the forehead with a hot iron, being proved the authors of any notorious falsehood. How many white foreheads should we see disfigured, how many fine gentlemen would be forced to wear their wigs as low as their eyebrows, were this law in practice with us!

Benjamin Hoadly

After the Portrait by Mrs. Hoadly

Theology, which had taken so prominent a place in the literature of the seventeenth century, fell into insignificance after the year 1700. We have already spoken of Clarke, a stiff and tiresome writer, but the best of his class. To compare Hoadly with Massillon, or Sherlock with Saurin, is but to discover how great an advantage the French still preserved over us,

who had never, even in the palmy days of our theology, enjoyed a Bossuet. Perhaps the most spirited contribution to religious literature published in the early years of the century was Law's *Serious Call*, a book isolated from its compeers in all qualities of style and temper, the work of a Christian mystic who seemed to his contemporaries that hateful thing "an enthusiast."

Benjamin Hoadly (1676–1761) was born at Westerham, in Kent, on the 14th of November 1676. He was the second son of the Rev. Samuel Hoadly, who gave him his early education, and then sent him direct to St. Catherine Hall, Cambridge. He became an active and useful London clergyman, of advanced political and religious views. In 1715 he was made Bishop of Bangor, and it is recorded, as a singular proof of Hoadly's simplicity and absence of ambition, that "when he went to Court to kiss hands on being made a bishop, he did not know the way upstairs." His famous treatise on *The Principles and Practices of the Non-Jurors*, which caused a sort of earthquake in the Church of England, was published in 1716. Hoadly's brilliant sermon on *The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ* was preached on the 31st of March 1717. The celebrated Bangorian Controversy was the result. In spite of the rage of his enemies, Hoadly was rapidly promoted, through Hereford and Salisbury, to the princely see of Winchester in 1734. Throughout the storms which raged around him, Hoadly preserved a dignified and apostolic calm, and he was a man of undoubted greatness of character. He was the reputed author of more than fifty publications, mainly controversial. He reached his eighty-sixth year, and "was so happy as to live long enough to reap the full earthly reward of his labours, to see his Christian and moderate opinions prevail over the kingdom, and the Nonconformists at a very low ebb, for want of the opposition and persecution they were used to experience." Hoadly died in his palace at Chelsea, on the 17th of April 1761, having outlived all opposition, "beloved and revered by all good men."

Thomas Sherlock
After an Engraving by J. M'Ardell

Thomas Sherlock (1678–1761), the elder son of the famous divine, Dr. William Sherlock, was born in London, where his father was rector of St. George's, Botolph Lane. He was educated at Eton and at St. Catherine Hall, Cambridge,

of which he became a fellow. At the early age of twenty-six, he was appointed to succeed his father as Master of the Temple, and soon became eminent as a preacher. In 1714 he was made Master of his College, in 1716 Dean of Chichester, and soon afterwards became prominent as a protagonist in the great Bangorian Controversy. Sherlock became successively Bishop of Bangor, Salisbury, and London, and refused Canterbury. He continued to hold the Mastership of the Temple for fifty years. Sherlock's *Sermons* were published, in four volumes, in 1755–6. He died July 18, 1761, after a very long and painful illness, and was buried at Fulham.

William Law (1686–1761) was the son of a grocer at King's Cliffe, in Northamptonshire. He was sent as a sizar, in 1705, to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and ultimately became a fellow. He was a strong non-juror, and gradually developed more and more austere religious views. In 1726 he made a certain stir with his treatises on *Christian Perfection.* In 1727 he became tutor to Edward Gibbon, who was twenty years of age, and it would perhaps be exacter to say, as the historian does, that Law was already "the much-honoured friend and spiritual director" of the Gibbon family. In 1728 the *Serious Call* was published, and he began to be surrounded by disciples, among whom were the Wesleys. Law seems to have resided at Putney with the Gibbons from 1727 to 1738, after which he went back to his parental home at King's Cliffe, where he founded a semi-monastic settlement. His mystical and philanthropic schemes were enthusiastically supported by two ladies of mature years, Miss Hester Gibbon and Mrs. Hutcheson. Law died, almost in the act of singing a hymn, in his interesting religious house at King's Cliffe, on the 9th of April 1761.

Allan Ramsay
From an Engraving

The earliest signs of impatience with the rigidity of literary rule came from Scotland, where a certain lyrical independence of Southern traditions had preserved all through the seventeenth century something of the old folk-song freshness. The actual value of these vernacular pieces—the knack of them was retained in one family, the Sempills of Beltrees, for three generations—was small, but they led on without a break to Allan Ramsay, and to such useful poetical antiquaries as Lady Wardlaw and, in England, Oldys.

Allan Ramsay (1686–1758) was born at Leadhills in Lanarkshire, on the 15th of October 1686. At the age of fifteen he came up to Edinburgh to be apprenticed

to a wig-maker. His earliest publications were parochially humorous, and his first ambitious essay was a continuation of King James' *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, 1718. Ramsay did a great deal for the revival of Scottish song by his anthologies, *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1724–27, and *The Evergreen*, 1724. In 1725 he published his best work, the excellently sustained pastoral play of *The Gentle Shepherd*, the life of Ramsay. He retired from the wig-making business, and bought a bookseller's shop, "at the sign of the *Mercury*, opposite to Niddry's Wynd," where for thirty years he was visited by every literary person who appeared in Edinburgh, and where, behind his counter, he broke into verse at the least excuse, "e'en at the shagging of a feather." In 1743 he built himself an eight-sided house on Castle Hill, but did not retire from business until 1755. Ramsay died in this his "goose-pie," as Edinburgh called it, on the 7th of January 1758. Ramsay completed that celebrated poetical hoax—the earliest of eighteenth-century forgeries — the ballad of *Hardy Knute*, which had been begun by **Elizabeth, Lady Wardlaw** (1677–1727). One of the first who took an intelligent interest in the bibliography of British poetry was **William Oldys** (1696–1761), of Lincoln, who was Norroy king-at-arms. He was not only a pioneer in the study of texts and states, but the author of some very graceful verses.

William Oldys
From an Engraving by Balston

The period of English literature which we have now roughly sketched is one of the most clearly defined and homogeneous in our history. In its consideration we are not troubled by the variety and diversity of its aims, by the multitude of its proficients, or by the distribution of its parts. All is definite, exiguous; all, or almost all, is crystallised round a single point; that point is common-sense applied to the imagination, to the highest parts of man. In all the expressions of this definite spirit, whether in Pope or Clarke, in Addison or Berkeley, we find a tendency to the algebraic formula, rather than to colour, fancy, or fire. In other words, pure intelligence does the work of literature, intelligence applied alike to concrete forms and abstract ideas, actively and energetically applied, without sentimentality or enthusiasm. The age of Anne succeeded in raising this literature of mathematical intelligence to the highest pitch of elegant refinement. But before it closed there were manifest signs of the insufficiency of such a manner to support a complex artistic system.

What in the hands of Pope and Addison was so brilliant and novel

that all the world was charmed, could but prove in those of their disciples cold, mechanical, and vapid. There were very dangerous elements in the optimism of the time, in its profound confidence in the infallibility of its judgment, in the ease with which it had become accustomed to rigid rules of composition, in the dry light of formalism which by it was so prompt to observe art and nature. These might satisfy for a moment, might produce a single crop of splendid literature, but they bore no fruit for the morrow. Even the prevalent admiration of the authors of antiquity was a source of danger, for these great fountain-heads of imagination were regarded not as they really wrote, but as seen distorted through the spectacles of the French Jesuit critics. The poets of antiquity were cultivated as incomparable masters of rhetoric, and on the basis of Horace, and even of Homer, there was founded a poetry totally foreign to antique habits of thought.

We have not, however, to consider what dangers lay ahead of the system, but what it produced in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and for this, within limits, we can have little but praise. England now joined, and even led, the movement of European nations from which she had hitherto been excluded as a barbarian. In a "polite" age the English writers became the most polite. Pope and Addison had nothing more to learn from their Continental contemporaries; they became teachers themselves. In their hands the English language, which had been a byword for furious individuality and unbridled imaginative oddity, became a polished and brilliant instrument in the hands of an elegant and well-bred race. So far, if we go no further, all was well. A little group of scholars and gentlemen, closely identified in their personal interests, had taken English literature under their care, and had taught it to express with exquisite exactitude their own limited and mundane sensations. These were paving the way for a frigid formalism which would become intolerable in the hands of their followers; but in their own day, in their brief Augustan age, the direct result was not merely brilliant in itself, but of an infinite benefit to English as a vehicle for an easy and rapid exercise of the intelligence.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF JOHNSON

1740–1780

THE period which we have just quitted was one of effort concentrated in one middle-class coterie in London, an age of elegant persiflage and optimistic generalisation marshalled by a group of highly civilised and "clubable" wits. That at which we have now arrived was the exact opposite. Its leading exponents were not associates, or, in most cases, even acquaintances; its labours were not in any large degree identified with London, but with places all over the English-speaking world. From 1712 to 1735 attention is riveted on the mutual intercourse of the men who are writing, and then upon their works. From 1740 to 1780 the movements of literature, rather than those of men of letters, are our theme. Solitary figures closely but unconsciously and accidentally related to other solitary figures, ships out of call of one another, but blown by the same wind—that is what the age of Johnson presents to us.

George II.
After the Portrait by Thomas Worlidge

If the combination of personal communication, so interesting in the earlier age, is lacking now, it is made up for to us by the definition of the principal creative impulses, which prove, to our curiosity and surprise, independent of all personal bias. The similarity between Swift and Arbuthnot, between Pope and Parnell, is easily explained by their propinquity. But how are we to account for the close relation of Gray and Collins, who never met; of Fielding and Richardson, who hated one another at a distance; of Butler

at Bristol, and Hume at Ninewells? This central period of the eighteenth century took a wider and more democratic colouring; its intellectual life was more general, we had almost said more imperial. Letters could no longer be governed by the dictatorship of a little group of sub-aristocratic wits met in a coffee-house to dazzle mankind. The love of literature had spread in all directions, and each province of the British realm contributed its genius to the larger movement.

In poetry, which must occupy us first, the forces which now attract our almost undivided attention are not those which appealed to contemporary criticism. Pope and his school had given a perfect polish to the couplet, had revived a public interest in satire and philosophic speculation in verse, had canonised certain forms of smooth and optimistic convention, had, above all, rendered the *technique* of "heroic verse" a thing which could be studied like a language or a science. It was strictly in accordance with the traditions of literature that no sooner was the thing easy to do than the best poets lost interest in doing it. It was Thomson who made the first resistance to the new classical formula, and it is, in fact, Thomson who is the real pioneer of the whole romantic movement, with its return to nature and simplicity. This gift would be more widely recognised than it is if it had not been for the poet's timidity, his easy-going indolence. The *Winter* of Thomson, that epoch-making poem, was published earlier than the *Dunciad* and the *Essay on Man*, earlier than *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Political History of the Devil;* it belongs in time to the central "period of Queen Anne." But in spirit, in temper, in style, it has nothing whatever to do with that age, but inaugurates another, which, if we consider exactly, culminated, after a slow but direct ascent, in Wordsworth.

Frederick, Prince of Wales
After the Portrait by Bartholomew Dandridge

The positive interest which the poetry of the middle of the eighteenth century now possesses for us may be slight; its relative or historical interest

1748 Aug.

1 Dr Johnson
2 Bp of Salisbury (Dr Gilbert)
3 Ld Harcourt
4 Mr Cibber (Colley)
5 Mr. Garrick
6 Mr Fraser (The Singer)
7 Mr. Nash
8 Miss Chudleigh (Duchs of Kingston)
9 Mr Pitt (Earl of Chatham)
10 Ch. Offg (The Speaker)
11 Ld Powis
12 Duchs of Norfolk
13 Miss Banks
14 Lady Lincoln
15 Mr. Lyttelton (Afterwards Lord Lyttleton)
16 The Baron (A German Gamester)
17 Anonym. (Mr Richardson)
18 Mrs Onslow
19 Miss Onslow
20 Mrs Johnson the Wife
21 Mr. Whitefoot
22 [Luggan the Artist]
23 The Woman of the Wells

Printed 20th May 1806, for Richard Phillips, No. 71, St. Paul's Church Yard.

is very great. In it we see English verse timidly reasserting its characteristic qualities and resuming forbidden powers. The change was gradual, without revolution, without violent initiative. Passion did not suddenly return in its bolder forms, but an insidious melancholy shook the pensive bosom. For nearly eighty years the visual world, in its broader forms, had scarcely existed for mankind; it was not to be expected that shy and diffident poets, such as were those of this new period, men in most cases of subdued vitality, should flash out into brilliant colourists and high-priests of pantheism. They did their work gingerly and slowly; they introduced an obvious nature into their writings; they painted, with a deprecating pencil, familiar scenes and objects. With Thomson they removed the fog that had obscured the forms of landscape, with Gray they asserted the stately beauty of mountains, with Young they proclaimed anew the magic of moonlight, with Walpole they groped after the principles of Gothic architecture. That their scenes were painted in grey and greenish neutral tint, that their ruined arches were supported on modern brickwork, that falsity and fustian, a hollow eloquence and a frigid sententiousness spoiled many of their enterprises, is not to the point. We must occupy ourselves, not with what they failed to do, but with their faltering successes. They were the pioneers of romanticism, and that is what renders them attractive to the historian.

Nor was it in England only, but over all Europe, that the poets of the age of Johnson were the pioneers of romantic feeling and expression. In the two great movements which we have indicated—in a melancholy sensibility pointing to passion, in a picturesqueness of landscape leading to direct nature-study—the English were the foremost of a new intellectual race. As a child of the eighteenth century, Stendhal, reminded the French, "Le pittoresque—comme les bonnes diligences et les bateaux à vapeur—nous vient d'Angleterre." It came to France partly through Voltaire, who recorded its manifestations with wonder, but mainly through Rousseau, who took it to his heart. Not instantly was it accepted. The first translator of the *Seasons* into French dared not omit an apology for Thomson's "almost hideous imagery," and it took years for the religious melancholy of Young to sink into German bosoms. But when there appeared the *Nouvelle Heloïse*, a great and catastrophic work of passion avowedly built up on the teaching of the English poets of the funereal school, a book owing everything to English sensibility, then the influence of British verse began, and from 1760 to 1770 the vogue and imitation of it on the Continent was in full swing. To the European peoples of that time Young was at least as great an intellectual and moral portent as Ibsen has been to ours.

It was in a comparative return to a sombre species of romanticism, and in a revolt against the tyranny of the conventional couplet, that these poets mainly affected English literature. JAMES THOMSON is at the present hour but tamely admired. His extraordinary freshness, his new outlook into the whole world of imaginative life, deserve a very different recognition from what is commonly awarded to him. The *Hymn* which closes the *Seasons*

was first published in 1730, when Pope was still rising towards the zenith of his fame. It recalled to English verse a melody, a rapture which had been entirely unknown since Milton's death, more than sixty years before. We may be told that the close observation of natural phenomena which made

James Thomson

After an Engraving by James Basire

the four books of the *Seasons* so illustrious had never, although scouted or disregarded, been entirely lost. The names of Lady Winchelsea, of Gay, even of John Philips, may be quoted to prove to us that the poets still had eyes, and knew a hawk from a hernshaw. But these pedestrian studies of nature had no passion in them; they were but passages of an inventory or of

a still-life painting. With Thomson, and mainly with his majestic *Hymn*, another quality came back to poetry, the ecstasy of worship awakened by the aspect of natural beauty. We can but wonder what lines such as

> " Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave, to Him ;
> Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
> As home he goes beneath the joyous moon,"

could have meant to readers such as Warburton and Hurd. We may answer—To them, as to Johnson, they could have meant nothing at all ; and here began the great split between the two classes of eighteenth-century students of poetry—those who clung to the old forms, and exaggerated their aridity, down to the days of Hayley and Darwin ; and those who falteringly and blindly felt their way towards better things through Gray, and Percy's *Reliques*, and Warton's revelation of the Elizabethans.

James Thomson (1700–1748) was the eldest son of the Reverend Thomas Thomson and his wife, Beatrice Trotter, well-born people of the Scottish Border. Mr. Thomson had since 1692 been minister of Ednam in Roxburghshire, and the poet was born in the manse there on the 11th of September 1700. Next year the family removed to a parish close to Jedburgh. Here, in early childhood, Thomson attracted the notice of Robert Riccaltoun, a local poet of some merit, and soon began to write verses. In 1715 he was sent up to Edinburgh University, being intended for the Church, and he remained there for ten years. Of his youth we know little, save that he was extremely susceptible to local superstitions, and so much afraid of ghosts that, even when at college, he would rush roaring out of the room if he was left alone in the dark. His father died in 1718, as was believed " under the oppression of diabolical malignity," having rashly undertaken to lay that celebrated spook, the Woolie Ghost. At Edinburgh Thomson was gradually drawn away from divinity towards literature, and in his twenty-fifth year he determined to adventure to London ; he sailed from Leith, and arrived almost destitute, having been robbed even of a handkerchief in which he had tied up his letters of introduction. He found

The Perishing Traveller

Illustration by Stothard to Thomson's " Winter"

patrons, however, and was received by the wits with remarkable cordiality. In March 1726 he published *Winter* as a folio pamphlet; it was highly successful, and from this time forward Thomson seems to have floated easily on the social tide. Of his letters from this period several have been preserved, and they give evidence of much lightness of spirits and an almost childish *naïveté*. *Summer*, addressed to Bubb Dodington in too humble a style of eulogy, and *Spring*, addressed to the Countess of Hertford, indicate two main sources of the poet's early prosperity. The Countess was a blue-stocking, and invited Thomson to stay at her seat near Marlborough, where he "composed one of his *Seasons*," probably *Autumn*. Johnson tells us that the poet took more pleasure in carousing with my lord than in directing the studies of my lady, and was therefore never invited again. In 1730 the *Seasons* appeared complete, with the additions of *Autumn* and *A Hymn*. But by this time Thomson had turned with hopefulness to the stage, although his first tragedy was not a success. At a critical moment, one character, immersed in woe, had to moan out the words—

The Gleaners

Illustration by Stothard to Thomson's "Autumn"

"O, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

which the wags instantly took up and parodied as—

"O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!"

and this was more than even Mrs. Oldfield's art could counteract. The poet was now selected to accompany on the Grand Tour a young Talbot, son of the Solicitor-General, with whom he saw France and Italy through 1730 and 1731. On his return he began, and in 1734–6 he published, in five successive parts, his gigantic failure, the didactic poem of *Liberty*. Mr. Talbot having died, and his father having been made Lord Chancellor, Thomson received in 1735 the office of Secretary of Briefs under the latter. This patron died in 1737, when Thomson printed a dignified poem in his praise. Having lost his place, the poet fell into debt and was arrested; Quin the actor found him in a spunging-house and released him, although they were strangers, purely on account of the pleasure he had received from reading Thomson's poetry. Meeting the Prince of

JAMES THOMSON.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOHN PATOUN.

Wales shortly after, and being asked about his affairs, Thomson admitted that "they were in a more poetical posture than formerly," and the Prince gave him a pension of £100, which was paid until the year of the poet's death, when it was unkindly withdrawn. Misfortune generally attended Thomson's pieces on the stage, where the ill-success of his "untoward heroines" became proverbial, but those dramas were sometimes lucrative in book form. In particular, there is reason to believe that his poetical tragedy of *Edward and Eleonora*, which was prohibited on the stage in 1739, brought in much profit, as a little volume, in subscription. The masque of *Alfred*, which in 1740 Mallet and Thomson composed to amuse the Prince of Wales in the gardens of Cliefden, is memorable for containing the song *Rule Britannia*, which is believed, but without absolute certainty, to be the work of Thomson. He wrote little during the last years of his life, abandoning himself more and more to constitutional languor. However, in the last year of his life, he woke up so far as to finish his noble poem *The Castle of Indolence*, and to compose yet another tragedy, *Coriolanus*. In the summer of 1748 Thomson caught a severe cold by taking a boat from Hammersmith to Kew when very hot; he was throwing this off, when he had the imprudence to sit in his garden while the dew was falling, and suffered a relapse. Symptoms of malignant fever declared themselves, and he sank rapidly, dying on the 27th of August. Thomson was universally beloved and bitterly regretted, for he possessed in a high degree the genius of friendship. He was "more fat than bard beseems," short, chubby, sleepy; but among his choice associates he would wake up, and be singularly communicative and entertaining. He was never married; he would have asked Miss Young of Gulyhill, the "Amanda" of his poems, to be his wife, but he never dared to do so on account of his poverty. We have mentioned one cause of the displeasure of Lady Hertford; another is more picturesque. Thomson is said to have irritated her ladyship by sitting under her fruit trees at Marlborough with his hands in his pockets, lazily biting pieces out of her ripe apricots.

Damon and Musidora

Engraved by Bartolozzi after a Picture by John Opie illustrating Thomson's "Summer"

FROM "SUMMER."

As from the face of heaven the shattered clouds
Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Nature, from the storm,
Shines out afresh; and through the lightened air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields, yet dropping from distress.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Joined to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick nibbling through the clovered vale.
And shall the hymn be marred by thankless man,
Most favoured; who, with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world?
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the hand
That hushed the thunder, and serenes the sky,
Extinguished feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears?

Cheered by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge; and through the obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repelled,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path;
While, from his polished sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.

FROM "AUTUMN."

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat
Retired: the rushy fen; the ragged furze,
Stretched o'er the stony heath; the stubble chapped;
The thistly lawn; the thick-entangled broom;
Of the same friendly hue, the withered fern;
The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
Concoctive; and the nodding sandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her best precaution; though she sits
Concealed, with folded ears, unsleeping eyes,
By Nature raised to take the horizon in,
And head couched close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away, The scented dew
Betrays her early labyrinth; and deep,
In scattered sullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.

Seem to the ſhivering Sailor from afar,
Shapeleſs, and white, an Atmoſphere of Clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid, o'er the ~~Main~~ Deep,
Alps frown on *Alps*; or ruſhing hideous down,
As if old Chaos was again return'd,
Shake the firm Pole, and make an Ocean boil.
~~Whence heap'd abrupt along the howling Shore,~~
And into various Shapes (as Fancy leans)
Work'd by the Wave, the cryſtal Pillars heave,
~~Swells the blue Portico, the *Gothic* Dome~~
~~Shoots fretted up; and Birds, and Beaſts, and Men,~~
~~Riſe into mimic Life, and ſink by turns.~~
The reſtleſs Deep itſelf cannot reſiſt
The binding Fury; but in all it's Rage
Of Tempeſt taken by the boundleſs Froſt,
Is many a Fathom to the Bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak Expanſe,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy Rocks, chearleſs, and void
Of every Life, that from the dreary Months
Flies conſcious ſouthward. Miſerable they!

Who,

Facsimile MS. corrections

* Still pressing on, beyond Gorneа's Lake,
And Hecla flaming thro' a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the Pole itself,
Where failing gradual Life at length goes out,
The Muse directs her solitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild ^ expansive scene,
Bids new-leas beneath another sky.
^ Prov'd in a Palace of ^ congealed Ice.
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing Court;
And tho' his airy Hall the lend his rule
Of driving Gentleness is forever heard:
Here the grim Tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here wings his winds with all-subduing frost;
Moulds his fierce Hail, & treasures up his snows,
With which he now oppresses Half the ^ Globe.
Thence ~~winding~~ eastward to the Tartar Coast,
The sweeps ^ the hawling ~~along the~~ margin of the Main;
Where undissolving from the first of

* Thomson's "Seasons"

But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once:
The pack full-opening, various: the shrill horn,
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mixed in mad tumult and discordant cry.

FROM "THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE."

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills
  Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
  And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
  And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
  That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds y-blent inclinèd all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
  A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
  As Idles fancied in her dreaming mood;
  And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
  Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsihed it was,
  Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
  For ever flashing round a summer sky;
  There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness in the breast,
  And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of 'noyance or unrest,
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

Another powerful innovator was EDWARD YOUNG, but his influence was not so pure as that of Thomson. The author of *Night Thoughts* was an artist of a force approaching that of genius, but his error was to build that upon rhetoric which he should have based on imagination. The history of Young is one of the most curious in the chronicles of literature. Born far back in the seventeenth century, before Pope or Gay, he wrote in the manner of the Anne wits, without special distinction, through all the years of his youth and middle life. At the age of sixty he collected his poetical works, and appeared to be a finished mediocrity. It was not until then, and after that time, that, taking advantage of a strange wind of funereal enthusiasm that swept over him, he composed the masterpiece by which the next generation knew him, his amazingly popular and often highly successful *Night Thoughts*. It was in the sonorous blank verse of this adroit poem that the vague æsthetic melan-

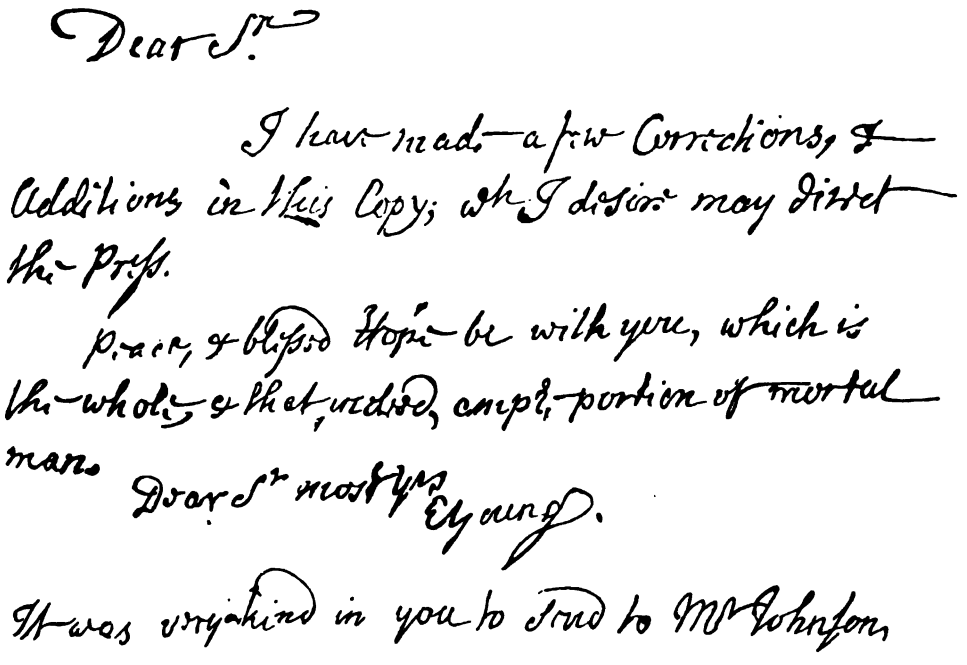
choly of the age found its most striking exposition. It was hardly completed before a prose rival and imitation, the *Meditations among the Tombs* of Hervey, deepened its effect and surpassed it in popularity, though never approaching it in real literary ability. These two books, so pompous, unctuous, and hollow—the one illuminated by passages of highly artistic execution, the other mere barren bombast—occupied the fancies of men for well-nigh one hundred years, surviving the great revival, and successfully competing with Wordsworth and Keats.

Edward Young
After the Portrait by Joseph Highmore

Edward Young (1683–1765) was the son of the rector of Upham in Hampshire, where he was born in June 1683; the father ultimately became Dean of Salisbury. Extremely little has been preserved about the youth and even the early middle life of this poet. He was educated at Winchester School, and went to Oxford in 1702. He seems to have shown no promise of distinction; at college he was "a foolish youth, the sport of peers and poets." He was elected, however, a law fellow of All Souls' in 1708, and continued to reside at the University. When past the age of thirty he began to publish, but his earliest essays showed little talent. His peculiar forcible gloom is displayed for the first time in *The Last Day*, a really fine thing, part of which was printed in the *Guardian* in 1713. Young seems to have looked to Queen Anne, who was his godmother, for patronage, and at her death he disappears. It has been conjectured that he went to Ireland. In 1719 he put on the stage his tragedy of *Busiris*, and in 1721 *The Revenge*; the latter enjoyed a substantial success, and Young, now forty years of age, became a personage at last. At this time, and for some years to come, he was enjoying the patronage of the Duke of Wharton. From 1725 to 1728 Young was engaged in publishing, in six instalments, his satires, which were afterwards united under

Edward Young's House at Welwyn

the title of *The Universal Passion.* When George II. came to the throne, Young, who had failed to enter Parliament for Cirencester, determined, although he was forty-seven years of age, to take holy orders; he was almost immediately appointed chaplain to the King. He is said to have asked Pope how he should conduct his theological studies, and to have been answered according to his folly with a recommendation to master St. Thomas Aquinas. A begging letter to Mrs. Howard, the King's mistress, exists to prove that Young equally needed advice in the arts of obtaining Church preferment; he was importunate, yet he got little. In 1730 he was glad to take Welwyn, a college living; and the next year he married a widow of quality, Lady Elizabeth Leigh. The poetry Young published during these years was beneath contempt, yet he



Dear Sr

I have mad a few Corrections, & Additions in this Copy; wh I desire may direct the Prss.

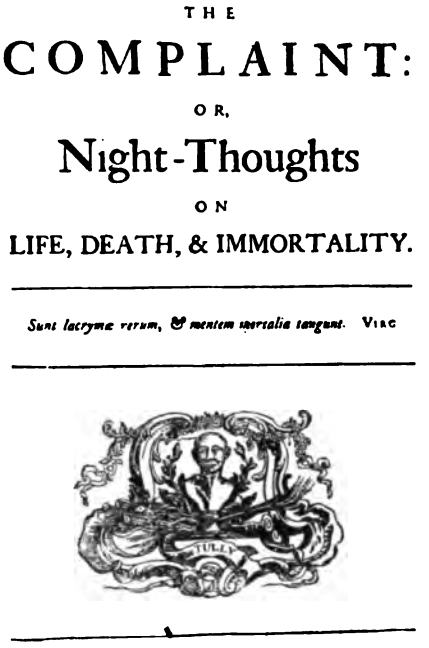
Peace, & blessed Hope be with you, which is the whole & that indeed, compt portion of mortal man. Dear Sr most yrs E Young.

It was very kind in you to send to Mr Johnson,

Autograph Note of Young's

was already meditating upon the outlines of his great and enduring work. When close upon the mature age of sixty, with no production behind him which could really encourage him to confidence in his gifts, Young began the composition of the very elaborate poem which placed him in the first rank of contemporary writers. *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts*, appeared from 1742 to 1744, and greatly impressed the age with its moral sublimity. Young, however, was unable to repeat his success; he published several other works in prose and verse, but none of them rose above his earlier level of fustian and flatness He considered himself to be cruelly neglected, and applied to the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury for preferment; Secker's reply is a monument of irony. The solitary success which attended his efforts was almost sarcastically inadequate; when he was nearly eighty he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager. Young lived on at Welwyn until he had nearly completed his eighty-second year, preserving his intellect to the last; he died on the 5th of April 1765, and was buried at Welwyn. The character of Young presents us with some

very curious features. He was the typical eighteenth-century adventurer of letters, truculent and yet obsequious, without a trace of self-respect in the presence of the great, but arrogant and presuming with his own class. Yet Young was not without certain stately virtues; he could be penetrating, dignified, and extremely polite. That he was the victim of affectation, seems proved by the story that he wrote at night by


THE
COMPLAINT:
OR,
Night-Thoughts
ON
LIFE, DEATH, & IMMORTALITY.

Sunt lacrymæ rerum, & mentem mortalia tangunt. VIRG

LONDON:
Printed for R. DODSLEY, at TULLY's Head in *Pall-Mall.* 1742.
[Price, One Shilling]

Title-page of First Edition of "Night Thoughts"

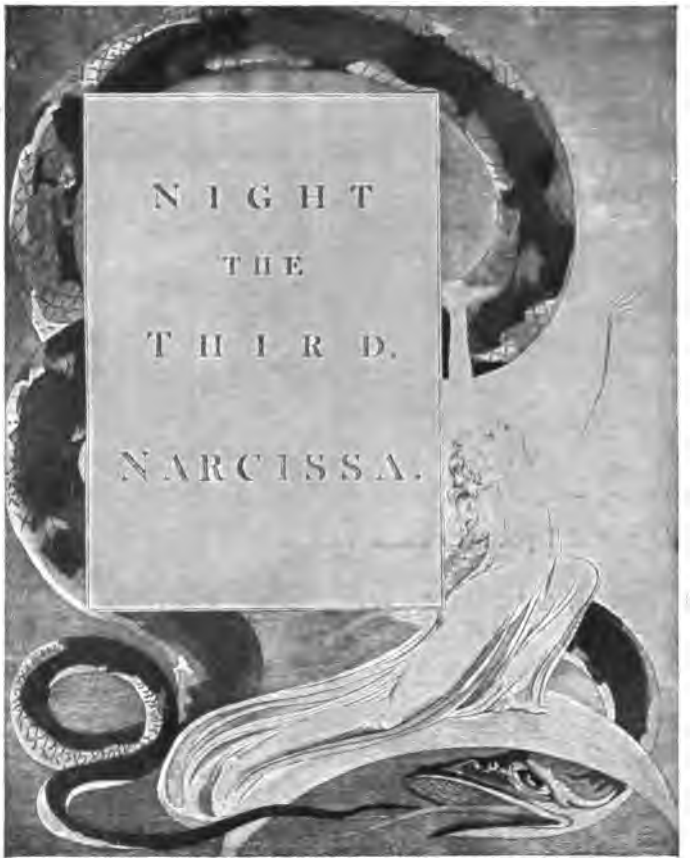
the glimmer of a candle stuck in a human skull. His friendship with Voltaire did credit to the intellect of both of them, and Young's extempore epigram on the appearance of the great Frenchman deserves an immortality of quotation:—

"You are so witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think you Milton, Death and Sin."

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS I."

O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light.
Safe are you lodged above these rolling spheres,
The baneful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions every hour;
And rarely for the better; or the best,
More mortal than the common births of fate.

Each moment has its sickle, emulous
Of time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the root ; each moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.
Bliss ! sublunary bliss !—proud words and vain !
Implicit treason to divine decree !



Title-page by William Blake to "Night Thoughts"

A bold invasion of the rights of heaven !
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace !
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart !
Death ! great proprietor of all ! 'tis thine
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.
The sun himself by thy permission shines ;
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean ?
Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me ?
Insatiate archer ! could not one suffice ?
Thy shaft flew thrice ; and thrice my peace was slain ;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

James Hervey (1714–1758) was appointed in 1740 curate of Bideford in North Devon. While he was there, he walked over to the churchyard of Kilkhampton, and on his return began to write his famous *Meditations among the Tombs*, which were published in 1746–47, and went through twenty-five editions. Hervey was a gentle, pious, and placable man, who died prematurely of a consumption, being at the time rector of Weston Favell in Northamptonshire. His *Theron and Aspasio* (1752) was at one time even more famous than the *Meditations* in evangelical circles.

James Hervey
From an Engraving by S. Freeman

Robert Blair (1699–1746) was the minister of Athelstaneford in Haddingtonshire from 1731 to his death. Very little is known about his life, nor does it possess any further interest for us than that in 1743 he published his strangely powerful poem in blank verse, entitled *The Grave*.

FROM BLAIR'S "GRAVE."

What is this world?
What but a spacious burial-field unwalled,
Strewed with death's spoils, the spoils of animals
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.
The very turf on which we tread once lived,
And we that live must lend our carcases
To cover our own offspring; in their turns
They too must cover theirs—'tis here all meet,
The shivering Icelander and sunburnt Moor,
Men of all climes who never met before,
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
Here the proud prince, the favourite yet prouder,

Illustration by William Blake to Blair's "Grave"

His sovereign's keeper, and the people's scourge,
Are huddled out of sight.—Here lie abashed
The great negotiators of the earth,
And celebrated masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts;
Now vain their treaty skill.—Death scorns to treat.
Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burden
From his galled shoulders, and when the stern tyrant,
With all his guards and tools of power about him
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm, and quick as thought escapes
Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

This sepulchral rhetoric in Miltonic verse, whether embodied in Young's rolling iambics or compressed into the homelier vigour of Blair's *Grave*, or tricked out in pseudo-classical turgidity by the disciples of Thomson, was what passed for poetry *par excellence* one hundred and fifty years ago.

The influence of Thomson was strong on Dyer and Armstrong. **John Dyer** (1698?–1758) was the son of a solicitor at Aberglasslyn, Carmarthenshire. He took to water-colour painting as a profession, studying under Jonathan Richardson, and wandering about in South Wales sketching ruins and landscapes. It was on one of these excursions that he wrote his poem of *Grongar Hill*, published in a miscellany in 1726, which contained studies of Nature which were novel and which were admired even to excess. Dyer went to Italy, and on his return he published a blank verse poem, *The Ruins of Rome*, 1740. He now entered the Church, and held successive livings in the counties of Leicester and Lincoln. In 1757 he published a long didactic poem on the care of sheep, entitled *The Fleece;* this was a failure, and Dyer was told he would be "buried in woollen." He died of consumption, at Coningsby in Hants, where he had lately fitted up a house, on the 24th of July 1758. The best part of *Grongar Hill*, which is a description of the Vale of Towy as seen from that eminence, is the following, which certainly deserves a place in a record of the advance of a sentiment for Nature in English literature:—

John Dyer

Old castles on the cliff arise,
Proudly towering in the skies!
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires!
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads!
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks. . . .
Gaudy as the opening dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wandering eye!
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are clothed with waving wood.

John Armstrong (1709–1779) was a close disciple of Thomson, whom he followed in his errors as well as in his beauties. He published much, but is remembered best by his didactic poem on *The Art of Preserving Health*, 1744. Armstrong became a physician in 1732, and practised in Germany and afterwards in London.

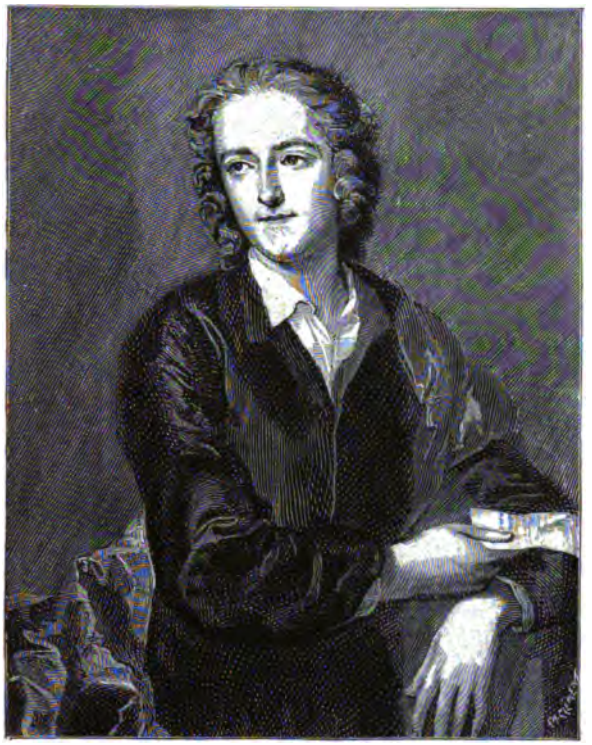
John Armstrong
After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Henry Brooke (1703–1783), long afterwards famous for the novel of *The Fool of Quality*, published in 1735, in six anonymous folio instalments, the very remarkable philosophical poem called *Universal Beauty*, inspired by the system of Shaftesbury. To this neglected work have been traced back the earliest rudiments of the theory of physical evolution.

With the prevailing taste in poetry the style in grottoes, urns, and tombs closely corresponded, and to this much of the superficial character of what was most enjoyed in Gray, Collins, and even Goldsmith, may be traced. The great gift of the first two of this trio was the renewed elaboration of their verse-form. Thomson had revived the beautiful Spenserian measure; in the *Odes* of THOMAS GRAY and of WILLIAM COLLINS a variety of stanzaic forms illustrated a return to pre-Drydenic variety and ease of prosody. To a world that scarcely appreciated the meaning of verse which was not either a succession of five-beat couplets or a mass of stiff blank verse, Gray introduced choral measures, richly and elaborately rhymed, full of complicated triumphal melody; Collins, at the same moment, in a lower key, whispering rather than shouting, fashioned his delicate, cold, aerial music. Unhappily, in the middle of the eighteenth century everything conspired to drag the pioneers

Henry Brooke
From an Original Portrait

of free art back to the bondage of rhetoric, and the work of Gray and Collins was instantly retarded and parodied by the frosty talent of Akenside, in whose hands the newly found lyrical fire was turned to ice. The impact of Gray on Europe was delayed, but could not be suppressed. The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* is the direct precursor, not only of Chateaubriand, but of Lamartine, and is the most characteristic single poem of the eighteenth century.



Thomas Gray
After the Portrait by J. G. Eccardt

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was the son of Philip Gray, a scrivener, and his wife Dorothy Antrobus; he was born in Cornhill on the 26th of December 1716. He was the only one of his parents' twelve children who survived infancy, and he was only saved by the desperate courage of his mother, who, when he was attacked by a convulsion, opened a vein with her scissors. Philip Gray was of a jealous and tyrannical disposition, and although he was well-to-do, he would contribute nothing to the support of his wife or child. The former kept a milliner's shop, and the latter was taken by a maternal uncle to his own house at Burnham, and in 1727 sent, at his mother's expense, to Eton. He made friends with Horace Walpole and Richard West. In 1734 he was removed to Cambridge, where he was entered as a pensioner first at Pembroke Hall and then at Peterhouse; from 1735 to 1738 he had the company of Horace Walpole at Cambridge, and he was already beginning to write verse, mostly in Latin. He was very unhappy, however, at the University, which he calls "that pretty collection of desolate animals," and he revolted against the deadness of the curriculum. In September 1738 he left Cambridge, and six months later he started

Silhouette of Gray
"Done in 1763 by Mr. Mapletoft"

in company with Horace Walpole for a three years' tour on the Continent. The friends went first of all to Paris, where they stayed two months, and saw a good deal of fashionable and of literary society. They then settled for three months at Rheims, where they enjoyed very cordial hospitality. In the autumn of 1739 they were sauntering through France; they loitered a while in Geneva, and then,

E L E G Y

Written in a Country Church Yard.

HE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind ſlowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkneſs and to me.

Illustration to Gray's "Elegy" **Now**

Drawn by R. Bentley for the Edition of 1753

protected by "muffs, hoods, and masks of beaver, fur boots and bearskins," they ventured over the Alps in November. This adventure deeply impressed the imagination of Gray; "not a precipice," he said, "not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry." All through 1740 the friends were together in Italy, but in the following May, while at Reggio, they quarrelled, and Gray returned alone to England. In November 1741 his father died, and was found to have

squandered the greater part of his fortune. Gray spent the winter of this year in London with West, and he now began to write English poetry; of his early tragedy of *Agrippina* only a fragment survives. In June 1742 West died, and Gray went down to Stoke Pogis, where one of his uncles had a house. Here he wrote his *Ode to Spring*, the *Eton Ode*, the *Hymn to Adversity*, and began the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. His uncle now died, and Gray's mother joined her two sisters in the house at Stoke Pogis, which now became Gray's occasional home until his death. He had given up the study of the law, and now, for cheapness' sake, he resolved to reside in Cambridge. In the winter of 1742 he proceeded to Peterhouse, and there for two years is lost to sight. In 1744 the difference between Gray and Walpole was made up, and the former began to correspond again with the latter and with other old acquaintances; in 1746 Walpole took a house in Windsor, so that, when Gray was at Stoke, the friends could spend one day of every week together. In 1747 Gray printed, in folio, his *Eton Ode*, and wrote the ode to Walpole's cat. On his thirtieth birthday he described himself as "lazy and listless, and old, and vexed, and perplexed"; but he was cheered up by the enthusiasm of a new friend, William Mason, afterwards his biographer, "a well-meaning creature." His favourite aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, died in November 1749, and her funeral seems to have led Gray to finish the *Elegy* which he had sketched seven years earlier. This famous poem was published by Dodsley in quarto in February 1751, and was greatly successful from the very first. In 1753 Gray's poems were first collected, in folio, with plates by Richard Bentley; in March of that year his mother died; his exquisite epitaph may still be read on her tombstone at Stoke Pogis. In 1754 he completed, in his slow way, *The Progress of Poesy*, and, in 1757, *The Bard;* these were published together, as *Odes by Mr. Gray*, in the latter year. In 1756 a cruel practical joke was played on the poet by some coarse undergraduates, who raised a cry of fire, and induced him to descend in his night-gown into a tub of water. Failing to obtain redress from the college authorities, he transferred himself from Peterhouse, where he had no intimates, to Pembroke, which was full of his friends. He was welcomed, and he made this college his

ODES
BY
Mr. GRAY.
ΦΩΝΑΝΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΤΟΙΣΙ——
PINDAR, Olymp. II.
PRINTED AT STRAWBERRY-HILL,
For R. and J. DODSLEY in Pall-Mall.
M.DCC.LVII.

Title-page of Gray's "Odes"

Cambridge home for the rest of his life. He was now able to live in greater comfort, since, the ladies whom he had supported being dead, he sank part of his little property in an annuity. Moreover, in 1759 he took a house in Bloomsbury, and was practically absent from Cambridge for three years, mainly engaged in studying early English and Icelandic poetry at the recently-opened British Museum. The final years of Gray's life were extremely uneventful; they were mainly spent, in great retirement and constantly declining health, in Cambridge, diversified by "Lilliputian travels" through portions of England and Scotland. In 1768 he collected the poems of his lifetime into one slender volume, and was appointed Professor of Modern Literature at Cambridge, but delivered no lectures. In 1769 he made his celebrated journey to the Cumbrian Lakes, and wrote the *Journal*, in which for the first time the sublimity of that scenery was properly celebrated. In the same year Gray formed the last, and one of the most ardent of his friendships, that with the brilliant young Swiss, Charles de Bonstetten. He hoped to follow his young companion to Switzerland, but lacked the strength, and on the 30th of July 1771 he died of suppressed gout in his rooms at Pembroke College, having been taken ill at dinner in hall six nights before. He was buried at Stoke Pogis. At the time of his death Gray was "perhaps the most learned man in Europe." He was a little plump person, very shy, with a fund of latent humour; the tottering and gingerly way in which he walked was the subject of ridicule, and he was altogether too delicate for the rough age he lived in. His admirable *Letters*, first published in 1775, revealed sides of his character previously unsuspected, and greatly to his honour.

Stoke Pogis Church, showing the Tomb of Gray

FROM THE "ETON ODE."

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
  That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
  Her Henry's holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
  Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
  His silver-winding way:

Elegy, written in a Country Churchyard

The Curfew tolls the Knell of parting Day,
The lowing Herd wind slowly o'er the Lea,
The Ploughman homeward plods his weary Way,
And leaves the World to Darkness & to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring Landscape on the Sight,
And all the Air a solemn Stillness holds,
Save where the Beetle wheels his droning Flight,
Or drowsy Tinklings lull the distant Folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled Tower
The moping Owl does to the Moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret Bower
Molest her ancient solitary Reign.

Beneath those rugged Elms, that Yewtree's Shade,
Where heaves the Turf in many a mould'ring Heap,
Each in his narrow Cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the Hamlet sleep.

The breezy Call of incense-breathing Morn,
The Swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built Shed,
The Cock's shrill Clarion, & the echoing Horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly Bed.

For them no more the blazing Hearth shall burn,
Or busy Housewife ply her Evening Care.
No Children run to lisp their Sire's Return,
Nor climb his Knees the envied Kiss to share.

Oft did the Harvest to their Sickles yield,
Their Furrow oft the stubborn Glebe has broke,
How jocund did they drive their Team a-field!
How bow'd the Woods beneath their sturdy Stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful Toil,
Their homely Joys, & Destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful Smile
The short & simple Annals of the Poor.

The Boast of Heraldry, the Pomp of Power,
And all that Beauty, all that Wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th'inevitable Hour.
The Paths of Glory lead but to the Grave

Forgive, ye Proud, th'involuntary Fault,
If Memory to These no Trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn Isle & fretted Vault
The pealing Anthems swells the Note of Praise.

Can storied Urn or animated Bust
Back to its Mansion call the fleeting Breath?
Can Honour's Voice provoke the silent Dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold Ear of Death?

Page of MS. of Gray's "Elegy"

Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
  Ah, fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
  A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
  As waving fresh their gladsome wing
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
  To breathe a second spring.

View of Eton Chapel
From Bentley's Illustrations to Gray's "Six Poems" of 1753

FROM "THE PROGRESS OF POESY."

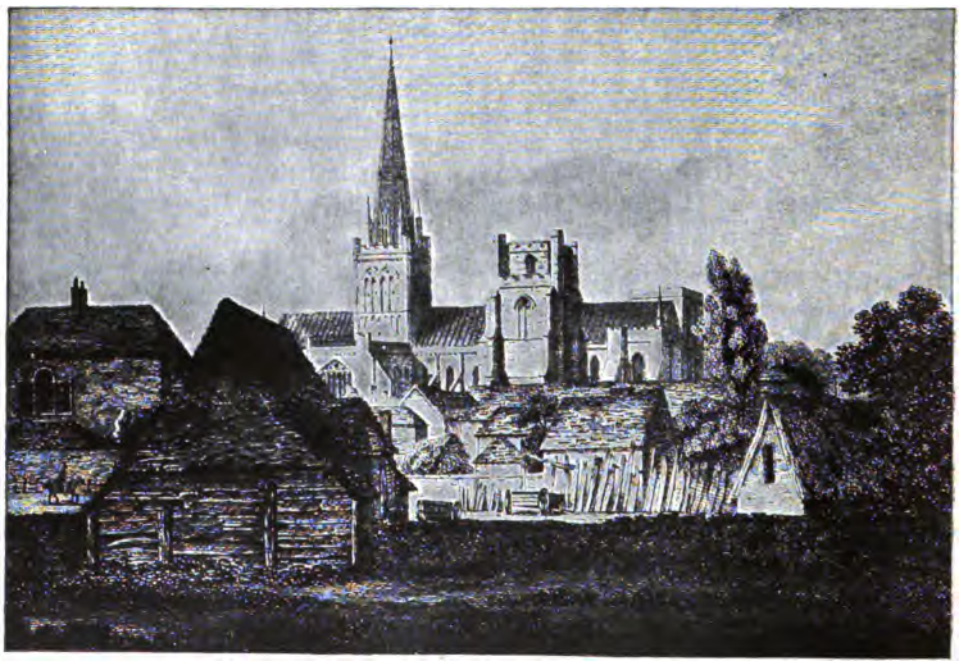
  In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
  To cheer the shivering natives' dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers wildly sweet,
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
  Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
  Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
  How do your tuneful echoes languish,
  Mute, but to the voice of anguish!
Where each old poetic mountain
  Inspiration breathed around;
Every shade and hallowed fountain
  Murmured deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nile, in Greece's evil hour,
  Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
  And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

William Collins (1721–1759) was the son of a prosperous hatter in Chichester, where he was born on Christmas Day 1721. According to an early tradition, he attended the Prebendal School in Chichester. In 1733 he was sent to Winchester, as a scholar on the foundation, and remained there seven years. There was a great deal of poetical enthusiasm in the school during this period, and Collins began to write verses at twelve. His *Persian Eclogues* are said by Warton to have been written when Collins was seventeen, that is to say, in 1738; they appeared anonymously in 1742. But meanwhile, and before the boy left Winchester, some of his verses had been printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Collins was head of the school in 1740, and, after matriculating at Queen's College, Oxford, went to Magdalen College as a demy in 1741. At the University he was "distinguished for genius and indolence"; he is understood to have left Oxford, rather abruptly, early in 1744. He went over to Flanders to be a soldier, but was told that he was "too indolent even for the army." He returned to London, and intended to enter upon holy orders, but was dissuaded from doing so by a wealthy tobacconist. It is plain that he was not fitted to devote himself to the labour involved by the adoption of any profession. He sold his property in Sussex, and "subsisted on the proceeds" in the leading coffee-houses of London until all his little fortune was dissipated. Dr. Johnson, who now made his acquaintance and liked him, said that "Collins had many projects in his head." None of them came to anything, and it is probable that the poet's irresolution was already the consequence of mental disease. His *Odes*, a slender volume containing the most splendid of his productions, appeared in the winter of 1746–47. It was not bought, and Collins, in a fit of anger, burned the

William Collins
From an Original Drawing

remaining copies. After the death of Thomson, Collins published, in June 1748, a singularly beautiful monody on that event. In 1749, after having wasted all his substance, and tasted the bitterness of poverty, Collins inherited from an uncle a sum of money "which," as Johnson says, "he could hardly think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust." He withdrew to Chichester, where he wrote, in 1750, his *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*, which was posthumously printed in 1788. He also wrote an *Ode on the Music of the Grecian Theatre*, which has unhappily been lost. He now settled down to write a *History of the Revival of Learning*, but the malady which had long threatened him now definitely attacked him. Terrified by the overshadowing of his intellect, Collins closed his books and tried to forget his anxieties by travelling in France. Nothing, however, stayed the progress of



Chichester Cathedral in the Eighteenth Century

the disease. His symptoms were originally those, not so much of madness, as of "general laxity and feebleness," but during a visit to Oxford in 1754 the malady took a gloomier character. For the next five years he lingered at Chichester, under the care of his sister, hopelessly insane, but with glimmerings of sanity, since in 1756 he corrected his early eclogues for republication in the following year. Towards the last, however, his condition became terrible, and he filled the cloisters of the cathedral with his shrieks and moanings. He died at Chichester on the 12th of June 1759. Gilbert White, who knew him at college, says that Collins was "of a light and clear complexion, with grey eyes, so very weak at times as hardly to bear a candle in the room." According to Johnson, "his morals were pure and his opinions pious." A few friends were much attached to him; but it is evident from all tradition that the beautiful light of the genius of Collins burned within a very feeble and inefficient physical framework.

COLLINS' "ODE TO EVENING."

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales.

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brow with sedge
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipped health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favourite name!

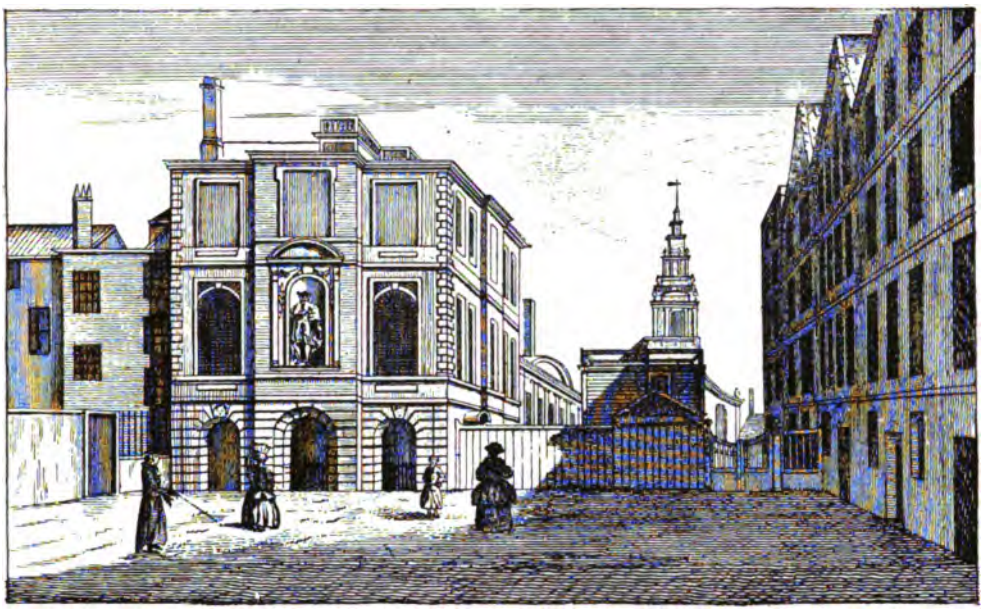
Mark Akenside (1721–1770) was the son of a butcher at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he was born on the 9th of November 1721. In his infancy his father's cleaver fell upon his foot, producing a lifelong lameness, of which he had afterwards the weakness to be ashamed, as a sign of his low birth. He showed an early precocity, and his *Virtuoso* (written in 1737) was the earliest poem in which the stanza of Spenser was revived. All Akenside's poetic work of merit belongs to his youth; his *Pleasures of Imagination* were published in 1744; his *Odes* in 1745. By the age of five-and-twenty he was practically dead as a poet; but he lived long afterwards as a highly successful doctor of medicine. From 1759 onwards he was principal physician to Christ's Hospital, and enjoyed all the honours of the medical profession until his rather sudden death from fever on the 23rd of June 1770. Akenside was a very arrogant man, pompous, and devoid of all sense of humour; "he looked as if he could never be undressed." He wore a large white wig and carried a long sword; he terrified the patients at the hospital by the severity of his "pale, strumous countenance." He was accused of ordering the out-patients to be swept from before him with brooms by the hospital servants. He was, however, a learned and "sagacious" lecturer, and he preserved both in poetry and science a dignified austerity.

Mark Akenside
After the Portrait by A. Pond

AKENSIDE'S "ODE ON A SERMON AGAINST GLORY" (1747).

Come then, tell me, sage divine,
Is it an offence to own
That our bosoms e'er incline
Toward immortal Glory's throne?
For with me nor pomp nor pleasure,
Bourbon's might, Braganza's treasure,
So can Fancy's dream rejoice,
So conciliate Reason's choice,
As one approving word of her impartial voice.

If to spurn at noble praise
Be the passport to thy heaven,
Follow thou those gloomy ways;
No such law to me was given:
Nor, I trust, shall I deplore me,
Faring like my friends before me;
Nor an holier place desire
Than Timoleon's arms acquire,
And Tully's curule chair, and Milton's golden lyre.



Christ's Hospital in the Eighteenth Century

From 1740 to 1760 the Thomsonian and the Graian influences were predominant. About the latter date there was a relapse into something of the old Jesuit precision. In CHURCHILL and his companions, regardless of the more solemn and Latin satire which Johnson had been cultivating, a return was made to the lighter and more primitive forms which Pope had used. For a moment the sombre romantic school seemed swept out of existence, but the popularity of the savage couplets of Churchill was brief. All that was left of the reaction was soon seen in the modified classicism of Goldsmith, with its didactic couplets as smooth and as lucid as Pope's, its humanity and grace, its simplicity and picturesque sweetness. In the *Deserted Village* (1770) we have the old kind of starched poetry at its very best, and at its latest, since after Goldsmith the movement which had begun with Pope ceased to possess any real vitality.

Charles Churchill (1731–1764) was the son of a curate in Westminster, where he was born in February 1731. He was a riotous boy, and a youth who failed at both universities. At the age of seventeen he made a reckless marriage, in 1753 he became

a curate in Somersetshire, and was ordained in 1756. He came up to London in 1758, and his life became a tissue of rowdy irregularities. In 1761 he published anonymously the first of his poems, *The Rosciad*, a satire on the actors of his time. This enjoying an amazing success, Churchill flung his cassock to the winds, and adopted verse-writing as a profession. During the next three years he published an incredible number of violent personal satires, most of which were highly successful, since people "liked to see the bludgeon's dint, when Churchill wrote." He threw himself with vehemence into the cause of Wilkes, whom he followed to Boulogne-sur-Mer in October 1764. Here he caught a fever, and died on the 4th of November. In the hour of Churchill's highest popularity Johnson saw through him, and said that he was a tree that would never produce good fruit, but only crabs. The image admirably suits the profuse, tart, and peevish verse of Churchill.

Charles Churchill
After the Portrait by J. S. C. Schaak

The close of this central period of the eighteenth century was stilted and inefficient in poetry. The rigidity of the classical system, now outworn after the exercise of one hundred years and more, strangled thought and expression, and forced those who desired to write to use mere centos of earlier and freer masters. The elegiac school had lasted but a very few years; its successes are dated almost exclusively between 1742 and 1760. The new poetic feeling, however, never fell into complete desuetude, for at the very moment when Gray and Young were becoming silent, several new forces asserted themselves, all moving in the direction of reform in taste. Of these the earliest was the revelation, between 1760 and 1763, of the mysterious paraphrases of Ossian; in 1765 Bishop Percy issued his *Reliques* of primitive English poetry; in 1770 the untimely death of CHATTERTON revealed an extraordinary genius of a novel kind; and from 1777 onwards Thomas Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, was recalling readers to masterpieces of art and passion that were not bound down to the rules nor

dwarfed by the classical tradition. Of all these elements the least genuine was undoubtedly the first mentioned, but it is equally certain that it was the strongest. The vogue of OSSIAN through all Europe became immense; no real British writer, not Shakespeare himself, enjoyed the respect of Europe so universally as the shadowy Ossian did at the close of the eighteenth century. Critics of high position gravely discussed the relative magnitude of Homer and of the author of *Fingal*, and by no means invariably gave the crown to the Greek. The key to the extraordinary success of these Caledonian forgeries is, that they boldly offered to release the spirit of Europe from its pedagogic bondage. No one, not even Goethe, was anxious to inquire too closely concerning the authority of fragments which professed to come to us from an extreme antiquity, tinged with moonlight and melancholy, exempt from all attention to the strained rules and laws of composition, dimly primitive and pathetically vague, full of all kinds of plaintive and lyrical suggestiveness. When Napoleon in 1804 desired to give the highest possible praise to a new, modern, brilliantly emancipated, literary production, he could find no better epithet for it than "vraiment Ossianique." And this suggests in what light we have to regard MacPherson's forgeries, so irritating to our cultivated taste in their bombastic pretentiousness. It was not what they were that fascinated Europe, it was what they suggested, and the product is what we read in Goethe, Byron, Chateaubriand.

FROM GOLDSMITH'S "DESERTED VILLAGE."

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watchdog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
There all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.

But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770) was the posthumous son of a writing-master and "sub-chaunter" in Bristol, where he was born, in extremely indigent circumstances, on the 20th of November 1752. His mother kept a small dame's school, close to the church of St. Mary Redcliffe. Curiously enough, although Chatterton was to become the very type of precocious maturity, while a little child he was dull and backward; he could scarcely be taught his letters, and "a fear was aroused that he was deficient in intellect." At the age of eight a sudden change took place, and he began to read from morning to night; in this year, 1760, he became a scholar at Colston's Hospital, the Blue-Coat School of Bristol. Here Chatterton remained for seven years, forming few friendships, living apart from the other boys, and cultivating in the great church of St. Mary—"that wonder of mansions," as he called it—a passion for all the neglected arts of the Middle Ages. In his mother's house were various mediæval parchments without value, which had been stolen from the church, and others were left carelessly within his reach. It is not known exactly at what date he began to hoard these documents, to puzzle over their writing, and then to imitate it. Quite in early boyhood, however, he had created a group of imaginary fifteenth-century figures, clustered around a Thomas Rowley, priest and poet, and a William Canynge, merchant of Bristol. In illustration of the adventures of these dream-personages, Chatterton began to write prose and poetry in what he believed to be Early or Middle English. Extraordinary as it seems, there is no doubt that a great part of this complicated design had taken shape in his brain, without help or suggestion from a single associate, before Chatterton was eleven years of age. He was not twelve when he showed the MS. of his eclogue of *Elinour and Juga* to a friend. Not until 1767, however, did he begin to circulate his forgeries among adult persons, professing that he had found these writings in the muniment room of St. Mary Redcliffe. They were accepted by the antiquaries of Bristol with greedy credulity, and Chatterton continued to produce more and more "Rowley" papers. The best of these belong to the year 1768, when the poet was between fifteen and sixteen. He sent some copies, however, to Horace Walpole, who submitted them to Gray, and Gray instantly pronounced them forgeries. In 1769 the restless and unhappy boy formed the design of coming up to London to try his fortune as a journalist. He had been apprenticed in 1767 to an attorney, but he got his indentures cancelled, and in April 1770 he arrived in town. At first he obtained a little ill-paid work as a political writer, but the death of Beckford in June closed this source of revenue. He now produced a very lively burletta, *The Revenge*, for which he received five guineas, but these were soon exhausted. He found himself

Thomas Chatterton
From the authentic Portrait in Dix's "Life of Chatterton"

A page from the Rowley Forgeries

alone, face to face with starvation, and to end his intolerable miseries he drank arsenic on the night of the 24th of August 1770, being seventeen years and ten months of age, and the most extraordinary genius of his years whom the world has ever seen.

FROM CHATTERTON'S "ÆLLA."

First Minstrel.

The budding floweret blushes at the light:
  The meads are sprinkled with the yellow hue.
In daisied mantles is the mountain dight;
  The slim young cowslip bendeth with the dew;
The trees enleafèd into heaven straught,
When gentle winds do blow, to whistling din are brought

The evening comes and brings the dew along;
  The ruddy welkin sheeneth to the eyne;
Around the ale-stake minstrels sing the song;
  Young ivy round the doorpost doth entwine;
I lay me on the grass; yet to my will,
Albeit all is fair, there lacketh something still.

Second Minstrel.

So Adam thought, what time, in Paradise,
  All heaven and earth did homage to his mind.
In woman and none else man's pleasaunce lies,
  As instruments of joy are kind with kind.
Go, take a wife unto thine arms, and see,
Winter and dusky hills will have a charm for thee.

Third Minstrel.

When Autumn stript and sunburnt doth appear
  With his gold hand gilding the fallen leaf,
Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,
  Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf;
When all the hills with woody seed are white;
When levin-fires and gleams do meet from far the sight;—

When the fair apples, red as even-sky,
  Do bend the tree unto the fruitful ground;
When juicy pears and berries of black dye
  Do dance in air and call the eyes around;
Then, be it evening foul or evening fair,
Methinks my joy of heart is shadowed with some care.

There was no conscious rebellion against fashion in the sentimental **William Shenstone** (1714–1763), yet his artifice and graces were links in the transition of style. He is remembered for the fantastic little estate of Leasowes, in Salop, where he devoted the whole of his leisure in dreams of how best "to diversify his surface, to entangle his

walks, and to wind his waters." The smoothness and the sentimentality of the eighteenth century reach their acme in Shenstone, to whom his own words may be applied:—

William Shenstone
From an original Portrait

'Tis his with mock passion to glow,
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold;

How the nightingales labour the strain,
With the notes of his charmer to vie;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs, and die.

Shenstone's most ambitious poem, *The Schoolmistress*, appeared in 1742; the *Pastoral Ballad* (from which two stanzas have just been quoted) in 1743. He died at the Leasowes, of a fever, on the 11th of February 1763. A figure of a totally different kind was **Christopher Smart** (1722–1770), in whose case the painful discipline of the age was loosened by nothing less than mental disease. He was born at Shipbourne on April 11, 1722, and at the age of seventeen became a scholar of Pembroke College. He was later a fellow, and held several college offices, but became increasingly unbearable, until, in 1751, he "set out for Bedlam." This was the earliest of many attacks of insanity, in the course of one of which (about 1762) Johnson visited him and prayed with him. It was in the asylum that Smart wrote his *Song to David*, which was published in 1763; this extraordinary production is his one claim to immortality. It is incoherent, vague and distracted, but it is full of astonishing audacities and beauties; of which these are examples taken almost at random:—

The wealthy crops of whitening rice
'Mongst thyine woods and groves of spice
For Adoration grow;
And marshall'd in the fencèd land,
The peaches and pomegranates stand,
Where wild carnations blow.

For Adoration ripening canes,
And coco's purest milk detains
The western pilgrim's staff;
Where rain in clasping boughs inclos'd,
And vines with oranges dispos'd,
Embower the social laugh.

For Adoration, without match,
The scholar bullfinch aims to catch
The soft flute's ivory touch;
And, careless, on the hazel spray,
The daring redbreast keeps at bay
The damsel's greedy clutch.

Christopher Smart
After a Portrait by Old Crome

Two disinterested lovers of our old neglected poetry, who did much to revive the

knowledge of it, were Percy and Warton. **Dr. Thomas Percy** (1729–1811) was born at Bridgenorth on the 13th of April 1729. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and from boyhood was destined for the Church. He became Dean of Carlisle, and for the last thirty years of his life was Bishop of Dromore. He dabbled early in Chinese and Icelandic, but soon settled down to the study of Early English. His famous *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* appeared in three volumes in 1765, and was a considerable factor in the development of taste. **Thomas Warton** (1728–1790) was also a clergyman, but of a more academic type. He belonged to a family of poets and antiquaries, and was the son of an Oxford professor of poetry of the same name (1687–1745). His brother was Joseph Warton (1722–1800), headmaster of Winchester, and editor of Pope. Thomas wrote much in verse, and was poet-laureate from 1785 to the time of his death, but he is best remembered in connection with the *History of English Poetry*, on which he was occupied for many years. This was not completed; the last instalment appeared in 1781, with the promise of a final volume which was never issued. Both the Wartons and Percy were intimate with Dr. Johnson, and formed part of his circle.

Thomas Percy
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Thomas Warton
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

James MacPherson (1736–1796), with whose name that of OSSIAN is inevitably connected, was a Highlander, who was born at Kingussie on the 27th of October 1736. He was educated at his parish school and at Aberdeen, perhaps at Edinburgh also; he came north again to be a schoolmaster at Ruthven. There can be no

reasonable doubt that he did collect genuine snatches of ancient Gaelic song, and that he was encouraged by several cultivated friends to travel through the Highlands in 1759 in search of more. In 1760 he printed anonymously his *Fragments of Ancient Gaelic Poetry*, and in 1762 an epic, in six books, called *Fingal*, which he professed to have translated from Ossian. To this day it is undecided what were the exact materials which MacPherson used. Neither in the cases mentioned, nor in that of his *Temora* (1763), could he be induced to display his Gaelic originals. This led to his being accused of sheer forgery, and Dr. Johnson openly charged him with imposture. He replied that he copied the poetry of Ossian "from old MSS.," but these he obstinately declined to produce. Johnson declared the whole thing to be "another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood." But modern criticism has not dismissed the matter with such high-handedness. It is now certain that Gaelic poetry attributed to or connected with Ossian or Oisin had been known in the Highlands of Scotland since the sixteenth century, and it is further certain that some of MacPherson's "translations" coincide with genuine Gaelic tradition. The original text, as it was called, of Ossian's poems, never forthcoming in MacPherson's life, was at last published in 1818, but it only made the darkness denser, for in large measure it was found to consist of MacPherson translated back into modern Gaelic, with admixture of fragments which were probably genuine and of considerable antiquity. It has been noted that in authentic Celtic romance the two cycles, the Fennian and the Ossianic, are never mingled, but that this is incessantly done by MacPherson. On the whole, it is probable that MacPherson was in possession, not indeed of MSS., but of copious fragments orally preserved, that he did not choose to admit their incoherency, and that he set himself to build around them a fictitious "epical" narrative, counting upon the credulity of his readers. Having once started this partial deception, he could never venture to withdraw his broad statements, and he descended to the grave under the stigma of forgery and falsehood. If he had been content to tell the plain truth, the great value of his paraphrases and expansions would have been more freely acknowledged, and Dr. Johnson need not have provided himself with "a stout oaken plant," nor have spoken of "the menaces of a ruffian."

James MacPherson
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

MacPherson continued to lead an adventurous life, but added nothing more of value to literature. He took advantage of appointments in Florida and India to amass a comfortable fortune, and for sixteen years he was M.P. for Camelford, in Cornwall. He died at Badenoch, an estate which he had bought in his native county of Inverness-shire, on the 17th of February 1796, and was buried—marvellous to relate—in Westminster Abbey. The leading incidents of his life have until quite lately remained obscure, for MacPherson was one of those men who love mystery for its own sake.

FINGAL,
AN
ANCIENT EPIC POEM,
In SIX BOOKS:
Together with several other POEMS, composed by
OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL.
Translated from the GALIC LANGUAGE,
By JAMES MACPHERSON.
Fortia facta patrum. VIRGIL.
LONDON:
Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT, in the Strand
M.DCC.LXII.

Title-page of First Edition of "Fingal"

FROM "FINGAL."

Son of the chief of generous steeds! high-bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every perilous toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder. Thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night, and lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steeds, cut down the foe; destroy.—The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain; and the sons of the desart fled.

Now Fingal arose in his might, and thrice he reared his voice. Cromla answered around, and the sons of the desart stood still.—They bent their red faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of Fingal. He came like a cloud of rain in the days of the sun, when slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Morven, and stopped in the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven.—It bends over the stream, and the gray moss whistles in the wind: so stood the king. His thousands pour around the hero, and the darkness of battle gathers on the hill.

The greatest literary discovery, however, of the middle of the eighteenth century was the novel. In late years criticism has dwelt more and more seriously on the position of those who practically created the most entertaining and the most versatile of all the sections of modern literature. With due respect to the writers of fiction from the sixteenth century down to Defoe

and Marivaux, it was in the year 1740 that the European novel, as we understand it, began to exist. The final decay of the theatre led to the craving on the part of English readers for an amusement which should be to them what the seeing of comedies had been to their parents, and of tragedies to their grand-parents. The didactic plays of such writers as Lillo, who lived until 1739, were practically the latest amusements of the old school of play-goers, who were weary of drama, weary of the old pompous heroic story, of chronicles of pseud-Atalantic scandal, of the debased picaresque romance. Something entirely new was wanted to amuse the jaded mind of Europe, and that new thing was invented by the fat little printer of Salisbury Court. SAMUEL RICHARDSON conceived what Taine has called the "roman anti-romanesque," the novel which dealt entirely with a realistic study of the human heart set in a frame of contemporary middle-class manners, not in any way touched up or heightened, but depending for the interest it excited solely on its appeal to man's interest in the mirrored face of man.

Samuel Richardson
After the Portrait by Mason Chamberlin

It was a particularly fortunate thing that in this far-spreading work of Richardson's he was accompanied by several writers who were almost his coevals, who were not subjugated by his prestige, but each of whom pushed on the same important reform in a province peculiarly favourable to himself. In considering the first great blossoming of the English novel, we find that a single quarter of a century included all the great novels of the age, and that Richardson was neither imitated nor over-shadowed, but supported by such wholly original fellow-labourers as Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Goldsmith. Each of our first five novelists presented a gift of his own to the new-born infant, prose fiction, and we must now consider what these gifts were.

What was Richardson's addition to literature may be described in a condensed form as a combination of art in the progress of a narrative, force in the evolution of pathos, and morality founded upon a profound study of conduct. Of the group, he was the one who wrote least correctly; Richardson, as a pure man of letters, is the inferior, not merely of Fielding and Sterne, but of Smollett. He knows no form but the tedious and imperfect artifice of a series of letters. He is often without distinction, always without elegance and wit; he is pedantic, careless, profuse; he seems to write for hours and hours, his wig thrown over the back of a chair, his stockings down at heel. But the accidents of his life and temperament had inducted him into an extraordinary knowledge of the female heart; while his imagination permitted him to clothe the commonplace reflections of very ordinary people in fascinating robes of simple fancy. He was slow of speech and lengthy, but he had a magic gift which obliged every one to listen to him.

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

The minuteness of Richardson's observations of common life added extremely to the pleasure which his novels gave to readers weary of the vagueness, the empty fustian of the heroic romances. His pages appealed to the instinct in the human mind which delights to be told over again, and told in scrupulous detail, that which it knows already. His readers, encouraged by his almost oily partiality for the moral conventions, gave themselves up to him without suspicion, and enjoyed each little triviality, each coarse touch of life, each prosaic circumstance, with perfect gusto, sure that, however vulgar they might be, they would lead up to the triumph of virtue. What these readers were really assisting at was the triumph of anti-romantic realism.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) was the son of a London joiner, who, though "a quiet and inoffensive man," thought it wise, after expressing sympathy with the cause of Monmouth, to retire to Derbyshire, where, at a place and exact date

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOSEPH HIGHMORE.

uncertain, his son Samuel was born in 1689. As a little boy he was very grave and earnest, preferred the society of women, and, characteristically, earned his first money by composing letters for people who could not write for themselves. His father was too poor to give him the necessary education to study for the Church, which was his obvious career. Throughout his life Richardson suffered from the insufficiency of his early training. In 1706 he was apprenticed to a printer in London, was a long while serving as a diligent compositor and press corrector, and finally, in 1719, was able to start in business for himself in Fleet Street, and then in Salisbury Court. Speaker Onslow employed him to print the Journals of the House of Commons. He slowly prospered, and indulged in a handsome brick house at North End, Fulham. Meanwhile, in 1739, some publishers, conscious of his epistolary facility, persuaded him to compose a collection of *Familiar Letters*, to be issued as a guide to the illiterate. He undertook this task, presently bethought him of a chain of incidents and a moral purpose, and in 1740–41 produced, in four volumes, and as a separate work, what is usually called the first English novel of manners, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded.* This work, or at least the earlier instalment of it, enjoyed a great popularity, but Richardson was slow in following it up. His next book, *Clarissa; or, The History of a Young Lady*, did not appear until 1747–48, and of this novel, a production vastly superior in conception and execution to *Pamela*, the success was extraordinary. The strangest legends are on record to exemplify the hysterical anxiety with which most women and some men followed the slowly developed fortunes of so much "merit and innocence and beauty." A still more complicated study of modern life followed in 1754 in the shape of the adventures of the incomparable *Sir Charles Grandison.* This was the apogee of Richardson's career. Extremely famous, and the centre of a choir of adoring women, he slackened the activity of his business, was elected Master of the Stationers' Company, and moved to a house at Parson's Green. He wrote no more books, but continued to attend in a measure to his business as a printer, and rebuilt his premises at Salisbury Court on a handsomer scale. He died of apoplexy, with which he had long been

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

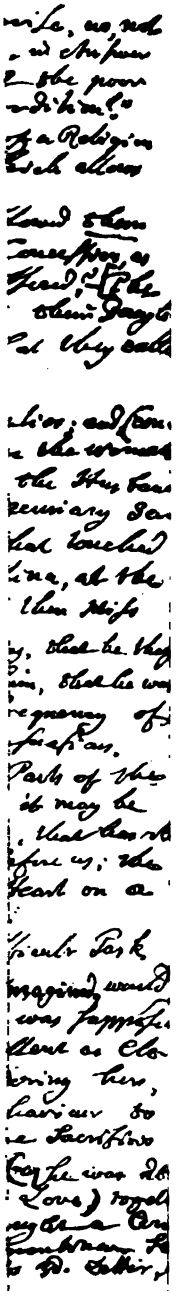
threatened, on the 4th of July 1761, in London. There was little external incident in this decorous and prosperous life. Richardson was married twice and had twelve children, so many of whom died early that by 1741 his nerves—he suffered "eleven affecting deaths in two years"—had become permanently injured by the constant strain on his emotions. All through middle life he was the victim of "sudden startings and dizziness," which made him extremely solicitous to avoid excitement. He has left, in one of his letters, a description of his person, so close and evidently faithful, that it enables us to reconstruct with exactitude the short, plump, ruddy printer, with his important manner, his grey eye "always on the ladies," toddling about among "the very large hoops" of his admirers with an expression "as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that." Richardson had some weaknesses; in particular, his vanity was great, and unfortunately it led him easily to the detraction of his contemporaries. He was "very shy of obtruding himself on persons of condition," to whose company Lady Mary Wortley Montagu unkindly says that he was never admitted, but he watched their movements closely out of his keen, down-looking eyes. In that age, when successful authors easily took the fashionable world by storm, Richardson remained a tradesman. He was happiest with his pen in his hand, writing long epistles to his "dearest ladies," the younger of whom became at last so numerous that they called him in return their "dear papa." Of his correspondents the most enthusiastic and the most voluminous was a certain Lady Bradshaigh, to whom we owe much of our knowledge of the excellent little moralist. It should be pointed out that in each of his novels Richardson employs the form of letters, the only one in which he was at ease, for the evolution of his story.

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

FROM "CLARISSA."

I am just returned from attending the afflicted parents in an effort they made to see the corpse of their beloved child. They had requested my company, and that of the good Mrs. Norton. A last leave, the Mother said, she *must* take.

An *effort*, however, it was, and no more. The moment they came in sight of the coffin, before the lid could be put aside: "O my dear," said the Father, retreating, "I cannot,



I find I cannot, bear it! Had I—Had I—Had I never been hard-hearted!" Then turning round to his Lady, he had but just time to catch her in his arms, and prevent her sinking on the floor. "O my dearest life!" said he, "this is too much! too much indeed! Let us, let us retire." Mrs. Norton, who (attracted by the awful receptacle) had but just left the good lady, hastened to her. "Dear, dear woman!" cried the unhappy parent, flinging her arms about her neck; "bear me, bear me, hence! O my child, my child! My own Clarissa Harlowe! Thou pride of my life so lately! Never, never more must I behold thee!"

I supported the unhappy father, Mrs. Norton the sinking mother, into the next parlour. She threw herself on a settee there, he into an elbow-chair by her; the good woman at her feet, her arms clasped round her waist. The two mothers, as I may call them, of my beloved cousin, thus tenderly engaged. What a variety of distress in these woful scenes!

Illustration by Stothard to "Clarissa"

Very different in kind, though of equal value to literature, is the gift to his generation of HENRY FIELDING, whose *Joseph Andrews* in 1742 succeeds so oddly to the *Pamela* of 1740–41. He also set out to copy human nature faithfully and minutely, but his view of life was more eclectic than that of Richardson. A much greater writer, in his own virile way one of the most skilful of all manipulators of English, he is saved by his wider learning and experience from the banality of Richardson. As Sir Leslie Stephen has well said, Fielding, more than any other writer, gives the very form and pressure of the eighteenth century. He is without the sensibility of Richardson, which he disdained; his observation of the movements of the heart is more superficial; he cannot probe so deeply into the fluctuating thoughts of woman. He has the defects of too great physical health; he is impatient of the half-lights of character, of nervous impressionability. He can spare few tears over Clarissa, and none at all over Clementina; he laughs in the sunshine with Ariosto. He also is a moralist, but of quite another class than Richardson; he is pitiful of the frailties of instinct, sorry for those who fall from excess of strength. Hence, while Richardson starts the cloistered novel of psychology, of febrile analysis,

Fielding takes a manlier note, and deals with conduct from its more adventurous side.

The various qualities of Fielding are seen to successive advantage in *Joseph Andrews* with its profuse humour, in *Jonathan Wild* with its cynical irony, in *Amelia* with its tenderness and sentiment; but it is in *Tom Jones* that the full force of the novelist is revealed. This was the first attempt made by any writer to depict in its fulness the life of a normal man, without help from extraordinary conditions or events, without any other appeal to the reader than that made simply to his interest in a mirror of his own affections, frailties, hopes, and passions. Fielding in each of his works, but in *Tom Jones* pre-

Richardson's Dining-room at the Grange Fulham

Richardson reading the MS. of "Sir Charles Grandison" to his friends

From an original Drawing by Miss Highmore

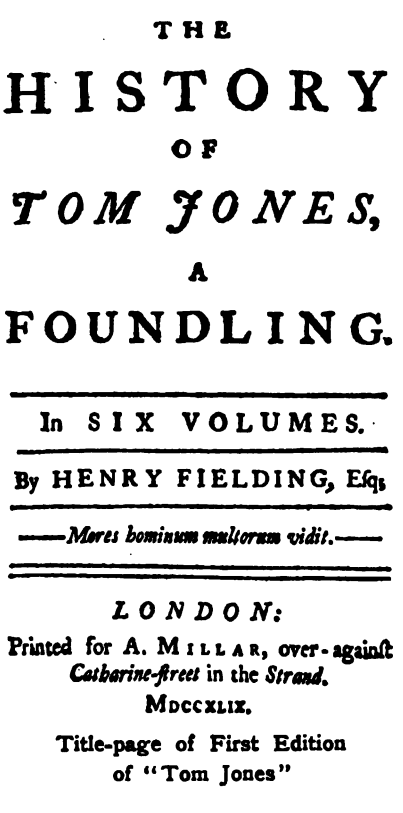
eminently, is above all things candid and good-humoured. He is a lover

of morals, but he likes them to be sincere; he has no palliation for their rancid varieties. He has his eye always on conduct; he is keen to observe not what a man pretends or protests, but what he does, and this he records to us, sometimes with scant respect for our susceptibilities. But it has been a magnificent advantage for English fiction to have near the head of it a writer so vigorous, so virile, so devoid of every species of affectation and hypocrisy. In all the best of our later novelists there has been visible a strain of sincere manliness which comes down to them in direct descent from Fielding, and which it would be a thousand pities for English fiction to relinquish.

The Tomb of Henry Fielding at Lisbon

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) was the eldest of the five children of Lieutenant Edmund Fielding and his wife Sarah Gould, of East Stour, in Dorsetshire; the novelist was born on the 22nd of April 1707, at Sharpham Park, the house of his grandfather, Sir Henry Gould. The family resided at East Stour until Henry Fielding was eleven; he went up to Eton, and is said to have left that school to proceed directly to Leyden to study law under "the learned Vitriarius" in 1726. Returning to London in 1728, he endeavoured to support himself by writing for the theatres, in which he was encouraged by his celebrated kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. He produced a large number of burlesques and farces, some of which (in particular *Tom Thumb*, afterwards *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, in 1730) enjoyed considerable success; but the plays of Fielding were most of them slight and flimsy, and he did not make them his regular employment after 1737. In the spring of 1735 Fielding married Miss Charlotte Cradock of Salisbury, a lady whose mental and physical characteristics, idealised by her lover's fancy, reappear in the portraits of Sophia Western and of Amelia;

he had known her for many years. For a short time he kept house at East Stour with splendid extravagance, and then, "having entirely devoured a little patrimony," came up to London again. The Licensing Act of 1737 put difficulties in the way of his dramatic projects which he found insuperable, and he dropped his puppet-shows for the study of the law, supporting himself in the meantime by journalism. Fielding now for a while worked hard at his profession, and we are told that he assiduously attended the Wiltshire sessions. The success of Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740 drew his attention to the possibility of parodying that tale of female virtue rewarded, in a parallel tale of no less consummate masculine virtue, and *Joseph Andrews* was the result in 1742. Richardson was excessively angry, and for the remainder of Fielding's life continued to be his detractor. Fielding now recommenced for a while his career as dramatist with much activity, but with little or no success; the latest of all his plays, of which nearly thirty have survived, was *The Wedding Day* of 1743. Later in the same year Fielding collected in three volumes his *Miscellanies*, consisting of poems, plays, essays, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, and—most important of all—the sinister romance of *Mr. Jonathan Wild*, which occupied the whole of the third volume; this had probably been written earlier than *Joseph Andrews*. It was the pretended biography of a notorious rogue who had been hanged at Tyburn twenty years before. The biographers of Fielding have been unable to follow his career during the next six years. It is thought that his admirable wife died towards the close of 1743, and we are told that "the fortitude with which he met all the other calamities of life deserted him on this most trying occasion." He married again, after four years of widowhood; his second wife, "an excellent creature," had been his first wife's maid, and his only associate when her loss had left him broken-hearted. Fielding is faintly traced in many parts of town and country through these years, and it is thought that the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lyttelton were among those friends whose good-nature enabled him to survive. At last, in the closing days of 1748, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Westminster, and his worst financial difficulties were over. During his retirement Fielding had been writing a novel, which was by this time complete; it was published in February 1749 as *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. He had been paid the relatively large price of £700 for this book before it had been published three months; it was universally read and widely imitated at home and abroad. Fielding was now settled in a house in Bow Street, which was to be his home almost to the last. He was eminently zealous and successful as a magistrate, and set himself to check the lawlessness which had invaded the streets of London. In the winter


THE
HISTORY
OF
TOM JONES,
A
FOUNDLING.

In SIX VOLUMES.

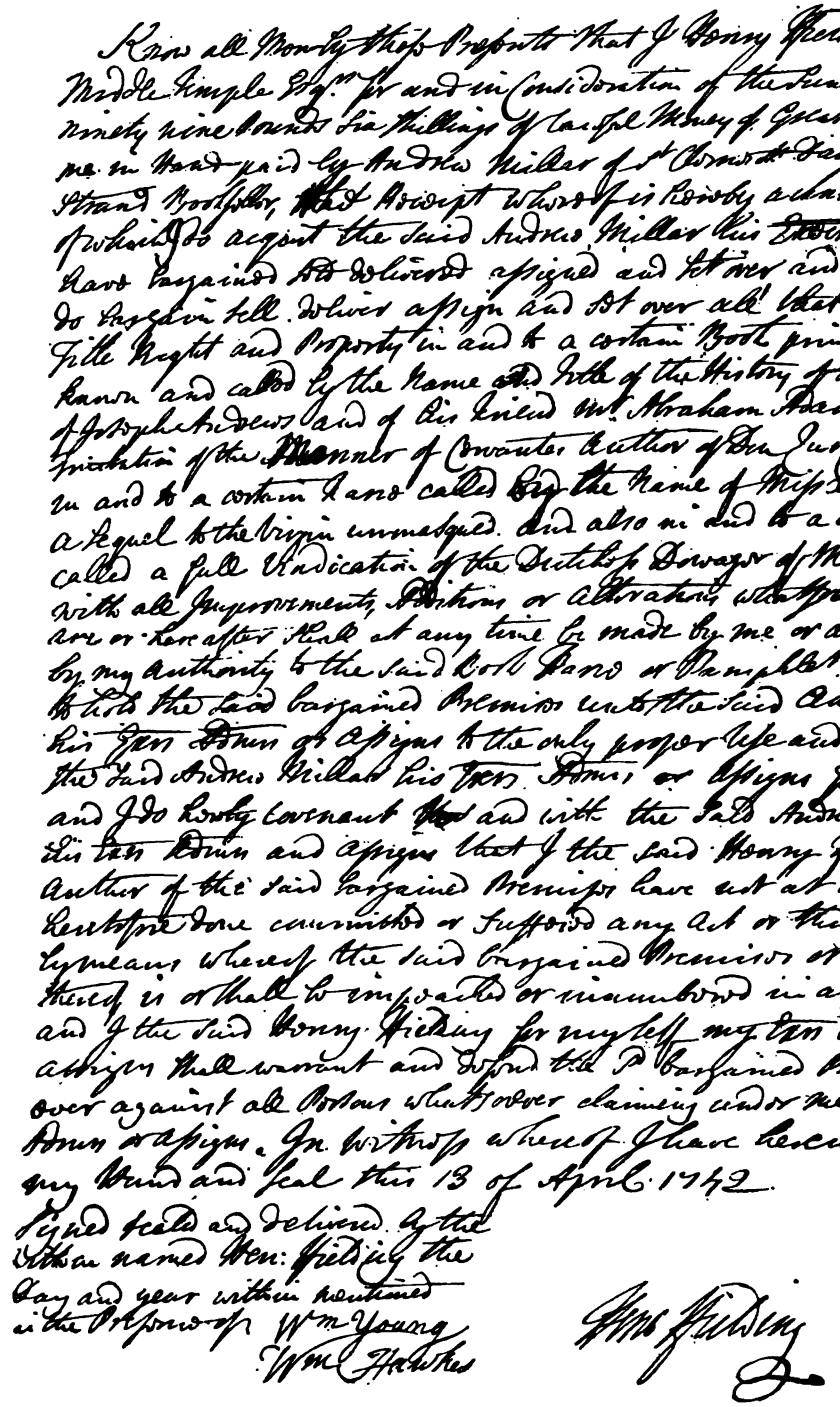
By HENRY FIELDING, Esq;

——*Mores hominum multorum vidit.*——

LONDON:
Printed for A. MILLAR, over-against *Catharine-street* in the *Strand*.
MDCCXLIX.

Title-page of First Edition of "Tom Jones"

Henry Fielding



Know all Men by these Presents That I Henry Fielding of the Middle Temple Esqr for and in Consideration of the Sum of Seven hundred ninety nine Pounds Six Shillings of Lawfull Money of Great Britain to me in Hand paid by Andrew Millar of St Clement Danes in the Strand Bookseller, the Receipt Whereof I do hereby acknowledge, and thereof do acquit the said Andrew Millar his Exors and Assigns Have bargained Sold Delivered assigned and set over and by these Presents do fully freely clearly absolutely assign and set over all that my right Title Right and Property in and to a certain Book printed in two Volumes known and called by the Name and Title of the History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr Abraham Adams written. Wherein is contained a Description of the Manners of Country Parsons Author of Don Quixote, and also in and to a certain Poem called by the Name of Miss Lucy in Town a Sequel to the Virgin unmasqued. And also in and to a certain Pamphlet called a full Vindication of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough &c with all Improvements Additions or Alterations which from time to time are or hereafter shall at any time be made by me or any other by my Authority to the said Book Poem or Pamphlet To have and to hold the said bargained Premises unto the said Andrew Millar his Exors Admors or Assigns to the only proper Use and Behoof of the said Andrew Millar his Exors Admors or Assigns for ever and I do hereby covenant that and with the said Andrew Millar his Exors Admors and Assigns that I the said Henry Fielding the Author of the said bargained Premises have not at any time heretofore done committed or suffered any Act or Thing whatsoever by means whereof the said bargained Premises or any part thereof is or shall be impeached or incumbered in any wise And I the said Henry Fielding for myself my Exors Admors and Assigns shall warrant and defend the said bargained Premises for ever against all Persons whatsoever claiming under me my Exors Admors or Assigns. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this 13 of April 1742.

Signed Sealed and delivered by the
within named Hen: Fielding the
Day and year within mentioned
in the Presence of Wm Young
Wm Hawkes

Hen: Fielding

Fielding's MS. Assignment of "Joseph Andrews"

of 1749 he was dangerously ill with an unusually severe attack of the gout, and though he recovered, he was probably never quite well again; in 1751 he seemed to Hurd "a poor, emaciated, worn-out rake, whose gout and infirmities have got the better even of his buffoonery," though Fielding was at that date only forty-four. He was now writing his novel of *Amelia*, which was published late in 1751. Fielding attempted to return to journalism, and edited *The Covent Garden Journal* for a few months, under the pseudonym of Sir Alexander Drawcansir. In 1753 he, like the rest of England, was deeply excited over the case of the mysterious disappearance of Elizabeth Canning, who professed to have been kidnapped by gipsies. Fielding entered into this queer business with extreme gusto, and the latest work he published is a favourable exposition of Betty Canning's case. But Fielding was now very ill, and his condition was made worse by his persistence in staying in town to break up a notorious gang of cut-throats who were infesting London. When at last he got away to Bath, his health "was reduced to the last extremity." He dragged miserably through a very severe winter, and spent part of the following spring at Fordhook, near Ealing, where he had a little house. But the doctors insisted on a warmer climate, and in June 1754 Fielding started for Lisbon. In his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755) he has given particulars of the adventures and inconveniences of this expedition, which he endured with philosophy and courage. He died at Lisbon on the 8th of October 1754, and lies buried in the English cemetery. The reckless generosity and sanguine improvidence of Fielding were shocking to the moralists of his own time, and there can be no question that he had something of the wildness of Tom Jones in his youth. But he was a man of elevated and tender feeling, quixotically courageous, full of love for his fellow-beings, and always ready to share his last guinea with a poorer man than himself. Mr. Austin Dobson's close examination of the incidents of his somewhat shadowy career has much lessened the scandal with which Fielding's name used to be accompanied.

Illustration by Michael Angelo Rooker to "A Voyage to Lisbon"

THE GREEN ROOM AT DRURY LANE,
AFTER THE PICTURE BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.
IN THE POSSESSION OF SIR CHARLES TENNANT, BART

FROM "TOM JONES."

The Gothic style of building could produce nothing nobler than Mr. Allworthy's house. There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture ; and it was as commodious within as venerable without.

It stood on the south-east side of a hill, but nearer the bottom than the top of it, so as to be sheltered from the north-east by a grove of old oaks, which rose above it in a gradual ascent of near half a mile, and yet high enough to enjoy a most charming prospect of the valley beneath.

In the midst of the grove was a fine lawn, sloping down towards the house, near the summit of which rose a plentiful spring, gushing out of a rock covered with firs, and forming a constant cascade of about thirty feet, not carried down a regular flight of steps, but tumbling in a natural fall over the broken and mossy stones, till it came to the bottom of the rock ; then running off in a pebbly channel, that with many lesser falls winded along, till it fell into a lake at the foot of the hill, about a quarter of a mile below the house on the south side, and which was seen from every room in the front. Out of this lake, which filled the centre of a beautiful plain, embellished with groups of beeches and elms, and fed with sheep, issued a river, that, for several miles, was seen to meander through an amazing variety of meadows and woods, till it emptied itself into the sea ; with a large arm of which, and an island beyond it, the prospect was closed.

Illustration by T. Hulett to "Joseph Andrews"

FROM "THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO LISBON."

A most tragical incident fell out this day at sea. While the ship was under sail, but making as will appear no great way, a kitten, one of four of the feline inhabitants of the cabin, fell from the window into the water ; an alarm was immediately given to the captain, who was then upon deck, and received it with the utmost concern and many bitter oaths. He immediately gave orders to the steersman in favour of the poor thing, as he called it ; the sails were instantly slackened, and all hands, as the phrase is, employed to recover the poor animal. I was, I own, extremely surprised at all this ; less indeed at the captain's extreme tenderness than at his conceiving any possibility of success ; for if puss had had nine thousand instead of nine lives, I concluded they had been all lost. The boatswain, however, had more sanguine hopes, for, having stript himself of his jacket, breeches, and shirt, he leapt boldly into the water, and to my great astonishment in a few minutes returned to the ship, bearing the motionless animal in his mouth.

Sarah Fielding (1710–1768), sister of the more celebrated novelist, was born at East Stour on the 8th of November 1710. Her first and best novel, *The Adventures of David Simple*, 1744, appeared anonymously, and was attributed to the author of *Joseph Andrews*, who contributed an interesting preface to the second edition of his sister's book. She was living in lodgings with him during the composition of *Tom Jones*, and when he married again she withdrew to Bath, where she became a prominent figure in society until her death in 1768. She wrote *The Governess*, 1749, and other works of didactic entertainment; but *David Simple*, composed in the company and possibly at the suggestion of her illustrious brother, is her only production of merit.

Illustration by Rowlandson to "Tom Jones"

By LAURENCE STERNE the course of fiction was reversed a little way towards Addison and Steele in the two incomparable books which are his legacy to English literature. We call *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* novels, because we know not what else to call them; nor is it easy to define their fugitive and rare originality. Sterne was not a moralist in the mode of Richardson or of Fielding; it is to be feared that he was a complete ethical heretic; but he brought to his country as gifts the strained laughter that breaks into tears, and the melancholy wit that saves itself by an outburst of buffoonery. He introduced into the coarse and heavy life of the eighteenth century elements of daintiness, of persiflage, of moral versatility; he prided himself on the reader's powerlessness to conjecture what was coming next. A French critic compared Sterne, most felicitously, to one of the little bronze satyrs of antiquity in whose hollow bodies exquisite odours

were stored. He was carried away by the tumult of his nerves, and it became a paradoxical habit with him to show himself exactly the opposite of what he was expected to be. You had to unscrew him for the aroma to escape. His unseemly, passionate, pathetic life burned itself away at the age of fifty-four, only the last eight of which had been concerned with literature. Sterne's influence on succeeding fiction has been durable but interrupted. Ever and anon his peculiar caprices, his selected elements, attract the imitation of some more or less analogous spirit. The extreme beauty of his writing has affected almost all who desire to use English prose as though it were an instrument not less delicate than English verse. Nor does the fact that a

Shandy Hall

From a Photograph by Duncan, York

surprising number of his "best passages" were stolen by Sterne from older writers militate against his fame, because he always makes some little adaptation, some concession to harmony, which stamps him a master, although unquestionably a deliberate plagiarist. This fantastic sentimentalist and disingenuous idealist comes close, however, to Richardson in one faculty, the value which he extracts from the juxtaposition of a variety of trifling details artfully selected so as to awaken the sensibility of ordinary minds.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) was the second of the many children of Ensign Roger Sterne of Chudleigh's Foot. He was born on the 24th of November 1713 at Clonmel, where the regiment, just returned from Dunkirk, was disbanded. In less than a year the household was uprooted again, and for the next ten years was on the incessant move from one Irish barracks to another. In 1723 Sterne was sent to school at Halifax, under the protection of some Yorkshire relatives; he stayed there eight years. In the meantime, his father, having been run through the body at the rock of Gibraltar in a duel about a goose, had retired to Jamaica "with an impaired

constitution," and had died there in 1731. Laurence Sterne, still under the care of his Yorkshire cousins, was sent to Jesus College, Cambridge. Here he stayed until he took his B.A., and then in 1736 went to York to live with his uncle, Dr. Jacques Sterne, the archdeacon. He is understood to have "employed his brains" for this "ungrateful person," who nevertheless obtained for him, when he took priest's orders in 1738, the living of Sutton-in-the-Forest and two small prebends. In 1741 Sterne married Miss Elizabeth Lumley, who presently brought him another living, the Vicarage of Stillington. He was therefore not ill provided for, and he lived at Sutton for nearly twenty years, making "books, painting, fiddling, and shooting his chief amusements." He also, having become estranged from his wife, indulged in a long chain of intertwisted flirtations, some of which were of a singularly indiscreet character. The early career of Sterne, however, remains very obscure, and was doubtless very uneventful until he reached the age of forty-six, when he was led by we know not what fortunate impulse to write *Tristram Shandy;* the two first volumes of this book were printed in York in 1759, and Sterne took them up to London to be published early in 1760. But he found that the fame of them had preceded him, and before he had been a day in London the lodgings he had taken in Pall Mall were besieged by fashionable callers. Sterne instantly became the lion of the season. The cause of this surprising reception was the enthusiasm of Garrick, who had been overwhelmed by the humour of *Tristram Shandy*, and had "promised" the author of it at dinner to numbers of great people. Sterne presently speaks of himself as moving in the suite of Lord Rockingham, and of his rooms as "filling every hour with great people of the first rank, who strive who shall most honour me." There seems to have been a widespread fear that this diabolically daring satirist would hold his contemporaries up to ridicule in ensuing volumes of his work, and prominent persons took grotesque means of preventing this in their individual cases. Bishop Warburton is said to have gone so far as to send Sterne a purse of gold, although he had never set eyes on him; he presently described him to a friend as an "irrecoverable scoundrel." Meanwhile Sterne was continuing the publication of *Tristram Shandy*, and beginning to issue the *Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, which ultimately extended to seven volumes (1760–1769). He did not stay in London too long; after three months of lionising he withdrew to Coxwold, "a sweet retirement" which one of his new fashionable friends had given him in 1760, and devoted himself to composition. But his fame and his fortune were not able to conceal even from his light-hearted nature the fact that his health was now seriously impaired. After another brilliant season in London, Sterne was

Coxwold Church

From a Photograph by Duncan, York

LAURENCE STERNE.

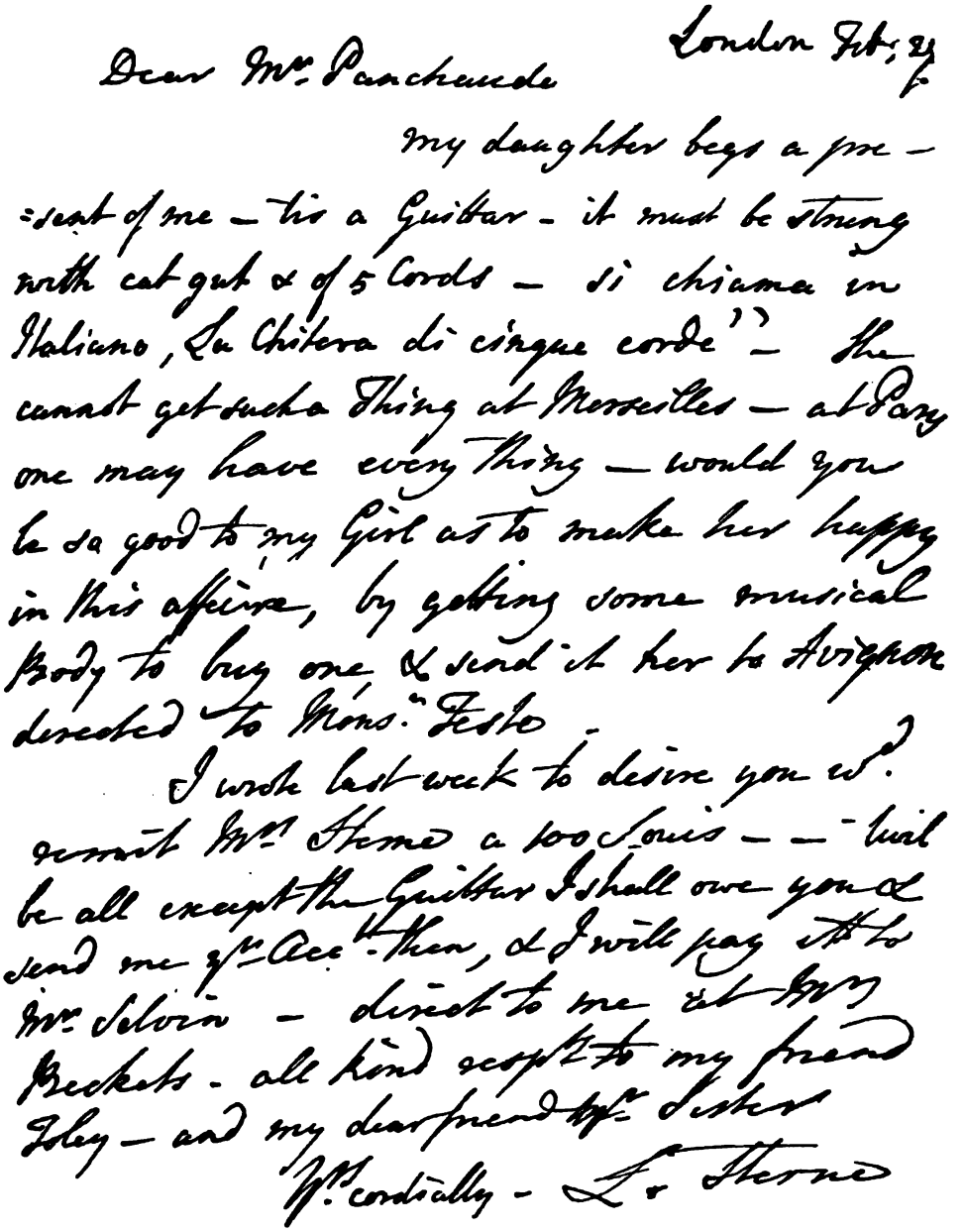
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

warned that he must not spend the winter in England, and as soon as vols. v. and vi. of *Tristram* were out of the publisher's hands at Christmas 1761, Sterne passed over to France. In Paris he found himself the centre of boundless adulation, which delayed him until a sharp attack of the lungs obliged him to fly further south. Accordingly he sent for his wife and his only child, his daughter Lydia, and then—but it was already July—hastened to Toulouse. Here he stayed nearly a year, in pretty good health; but he tired of the place, and insisted on spending the winter of 1763 at Montpellier, which did not suit him at all. After a gay bout in Paris, Sterne found himself back in his

Caricature of Sterne and Bridges

From Dibdin's "Bibliographical Tour"

parsonage of Sutton in the summer of 1764. In October 1765 Sterne started upon that *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, which is the subject of the most charming of his books (published in 1768); he did not get back till July 1766. In 1767 a ninth volume brought *Tristram Shandy* to an end, though not to a close, for it remains unfinished. The Eliza of the posthumous *Letters from Yorick to Eliza*, 1775, now occupied a great deal of Sterne's attention. This was Mrs. Draper, the widow of an Indian merchant, with whom he carried on a violent sentimental flirtation. She returned to India, and Sterne, with his daughter Lydia, now "an elegant accomplished little slut," went to Coxwold for the autumn and winter of 1767. He came back as usual to London, but he had long been dying of consumption, and the end came rather



Dear Mr. Panchaude London Feb. 25

My daughter begs a pre-
sent of me — 'tis a Guitar — it must be strung
with cat-gut & of 5 Cords — 'si chiama in
Italiano, La Chitera di cinque corde'' — She
cannot get such a Thing at Marseilles — at Paris
one may have every thing — would you
be so good to my Girl as to make her happy
in this affaire, by getting some musical
Body to buy one & send it her to Avignon
directed to Mons. Festo.

I wrote last week to desire you wd.
permit Mr. Sterne a 100 Louis — — 'twill
be all except the Guitar I shall owe you &
send me y^r Acc^t. then, & I will pay it to
Mr. Selvin — direct to me at Mrs
Beckets — all kind respects to my friend
Foley — and my dear friend y^r Sister
y^rs cordially — L^o Sterne

Autograph Letter of Sterne

suddenly on the 18th of March 1768, over a shop in Old Bond Street. His corpse was neglected by the hired watchers, and, although buried in the yard of St. George's, Hanover Square, is said to have been stolen by body-snatchers, who sold it to the Cambridge Professor of Anatomy. Of the temperament of Sterne, no better summary can be given than is provided by himself, when, after describing some misfortune, he says: "But I'll lay a guinea that in half-an-hour I shall be as merry as a monkey, and forget it all."

Illustration by Rowlandson to Sterne's "Sentimental Journey"

FROM "TRISTRAM SHANDY."

When my Father received the letter which brought him the melancholy news of my brother Bobby's death, he was busy calculating the expense of his riding post from Calais to Paris, and so on to Lyons.

'Twas a most inauspicious journey, my Father having had every foot of it to travel over again, and his calculation to begin afresh, when he had almost got to the end of it, by Obadiah's opening the door to inform him the family was out of yeast, and to ask whether he might not take the great coach-horse early in the morning, and ride in search of some. "With all my heart, Obadiah," said my Father, pursuing his journey, "take the coach-horse, and welcome." "But he wants a shoe, poor creature," said Obadiah. "Poor creature," said my Uncle Toby, vibrating the note back again like a string in unison. "Then take the Scotch horse," quoth my Father hastily. "He cannot bear a saddle upon his back," quoth Obadiah, "for the whole world." "The Devil's in that horse; then take Patriot," cried my Father, and shut the door. "Patriot is sold," said Obadiah. "Here's for you!" cried my Father, making a pause, and looking in my Uncle Toby's face as if the thing had not been a matter of fact. "Your worship ordered me to sell him last April," said Obadiah. "Then go on foot for your pains," cried my Father. "I had much rather walk than ride," said Obadiah, shutting the door.

"What plagues!" cried my Father, going on with his calculation. "But the waters are out," said Obadiah, opening the door again.

FROM "A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

I own my first sensations, as soon as I was left solitary and alone in my own chamber in the hotel, were far from being so flattering as I had prefigured them. I walked up gravely to the window in my dusty black coat, and looking through the glass saw all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure. The old with broken lances, and in helmets which had lost their vizards; the young in armour bright, which shone like gold, beplumed with each gay feather of the east; all, all tilting at it, like fascinated knights in tournaments of yore for fame and love. "Alas! poor Yorick!" cried I, "what art thou doing here?"

Sterne's "Maria"

From an Original Pastel by Russell at Bayfordbury

If in Sterne the qualities of imagination were heightened, and the susceptibilities permitted to become as feverish and neurotic as possible, the action of TOBIAS SMOLLETT was absolutely the reverse. This rough and strong writer was troubled with no superfluous refinements of instinct. He delighted in creating types of eccentric profligates and ruffians, and to do this was to withdraw from the novel as Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne conceived it, back into a form of the picaresque romance. He did not realise what his greatest compeers were doing, and when he wrote *Roderick Random* he avowedly modelled it on *Gil Blas*, coming, as critics have observed, even closer to the Spanish *picaros* spirit than did Le Sage himself. If Smollett had gone no further than this, and had merely woven out of his head one more romance of the picaresque class, we should never have heard of him. But his own life, unlike those of his three chief rivals, had been adventurous on land and under sail, and he described what he had seen and suffered. Three years later he published *Peregrine Pickle*, and just before he died *Humphry Clinker*. The abundant remainder of his work is negligible, these three books alone being worthy of particular recommendation in a sketch of literature so summary as this.

In the work of the three greater novelists the element of veracity is very

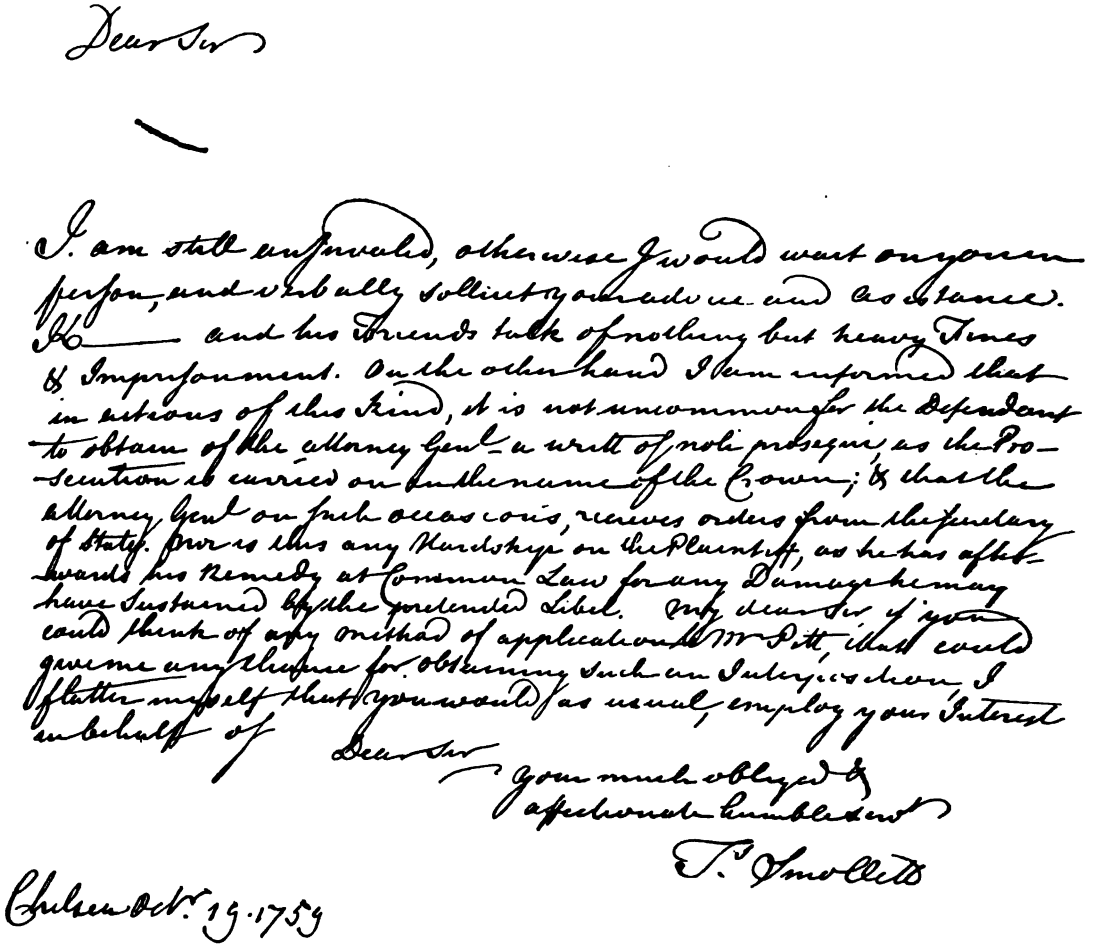
strong, even though in the case of Sterne it may seem concealed beneath a variegated affectation of manner. In each, however, the main aim, and the principal element of originality, is the observation of mankind as it really exists. But Smollett was not great enough to continue this admirable innovation; he went back to the older, easier method of gibbeting a peculiarity and exaggerating an exception. He was also inferior to his rivals in the power of constructing a story, and in his rude zeal to "subject folly to ridicule, and vice to indignation," he raced from one rough episode to another, bestowing very little attention upon that evolution of character which should be the essence of successful fiction. The proper way to regard Smollett is, doubtless, as a man of experience and energy, who was encouraged by the success of the realistic novel to revive the old romance of adventure, and to give it certain new features. The violence of Smollett is remarkable; it was founded on a peculiarity of his own temper, but it gives his characters a sort of contortion of superhuman rage and set grimaces that seem mechanically horrible. When young Roderick Random's cousin wishes to tease him, he has no way of doing it short of hunting him with beagles, and when it is desired that Mrs. Pickle should be represented as ill-tempered, a female like one of the Furies is evoked. But while it is easy to find fault with Smollett's barbarous books, it is not so easy to explain why we continue to read them with enjoyment, nor why their vigorous horse-play has left its mark on novelists so unlike their author as Lever, Dickens, and Charles Reade. Scott, too, acknowledged that he was indebted to the methods of Smollett. The Scotch novelist's best book, moreover, is his latest, and its genial and brisk comicality has done much to redeem the memory of earlier errors of taste.

Tobias Smollett

After an Original Portrait painted in Italy about 1770

Tobias George Smollett (1721–1771) was the youngest grandson of Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, in Dumbartonshire, a gentleman of wealth and position. Archibald Smollett, the father of the novelist, was a "ne'er-do-weel," who inhabited a little

house called Dalquhurn, on the Bonhill estate; and there Tobias was born in March 1721. Archibald died in his son's early infancy, and Tobias was brought up by his grandfather. After a short schooling at Dumbarton, he was apprenticed to a medical man at Glasgow. Perhaps during this time he also attended the University, for he certainly acquired some Latin and Greek. We are told that he was "a restive apprentice and a mischievous stripling." In 1739 he came up to London to seek his fortune, with the MS. of his tragedy of *The Regicide* in his pocket; but although he saw



Dear Sir

I am still unprovided, otherwise I would wait on you in person, and verbally solicit your advice and assistance. H—— and his friends talk of nothing but heavy Fines & Imprisonment. On the other hand I am informed that in actions of this kind, it is not uncommon for the defendant to obtain of the Attorney Genl a writt of nolle prosequi, as the Prosecution is carried on in the name of the Crown; & that the Attorney Genl on such occasions, receives orders from the Secretary of State. Nor is this any Hardship on the Plaintiff, as he has afterwards his remedy at Common Law for any Damage he may have sustained by the pretended Libel. My dear Sir if you could think of any method of application to Mr Pitt, that could give me any chance for obtaining such an Interview, I flatter myself that you would as usual, employ your Interest in behalf of

Dear Sir

Your much obliged &
affectionate humble Servt

T. Smollett

Chelsea Oct. 19. 1759

Autograph Letter from Smollett

Lyttelton, he met with no solid encouragement. The war of Jenkins' Ear was just beginning, and Smollett enlisted as surgeon's mate on board a battleship; he took part in the expedition against Carthagena, and gained the experience of life at sea which he used with so much freedom in *Roderick Random*. Disgusted with the inefficiency of the fleet, he withdrew, late in 1740, to Jamaica, where he seems to have married, and where he probably practised as a physician until 1744, when he returned to London and set up as a surgeon in Westminster. Mrs. Smollett, the Narcissa of *Roderick Random*, was left behind in Jamaica until 1747, when she joined her

husband in England. From 1746 to 1748 Smollett made repeated attempts to win attention by publishing pamphlets of poetry, mainly of a satirical character; this was not his line. But early in the last-mentioned year he brought out his novel of *Roderick Random*, which he followed in 1751 by *Peregrine Pickle*, and in 1753 by *Ferdinand, Count Fathom*. He set himself to imitate the method of *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*, and he introduced innumerable touches of more or less faithful autobiography. Those books, and particularly the first two, in spite of or perhaps because of their brutal vigour, found instant favour with the public. But Smollett did not abandon his interest in medicine. In 1750 he took his degree of M.D. at Aberdeen; but the life of a physician does not seem to have suited him, and it is more than probable that his eccentric and ferocious manners did not attract patients. He therefore continued to cultivate miscellaneous letters, translating, compiling, and arranging. In 1759 an Admiral Knowles, whose incompetency Smollett had boldly exposed, brought an action for libel against him, and the novelist was fined and imprisoned for three months in the King's Bench. His pedestrian labours in English history brought him in a steady income from 1757 to 1766; the general opinion of the age is summed up by one of Thackeray's characters, who says, "Smollett's history is more dull, but by no means so dangerous as that of Hume." In 1762 he returned to fiction, with the sad failure of *Sir Launcelot Greaves*. Early in 1763 his only daughter, the sole being in the world to whom Smollett was deeply attached, died, and he and his wife left England, in charge of two young ladies of fortune; this enabled them to travel with the comfort demanded by Smollett's health, which was now seriously failing. He travelled through Italy and France without contentment or appreciation until the spring of 1765, and in the following year he published his curious *Travels*, in which he said many things about the landscape and art of Southern Europe which Sterne very wittily remarked ought to have been "reserved for his physician." The worst and least human of his books, the horrid *Adventures of an Atom*, appeared in 1769. But before this Smollett had discovered that the only hope of prolonging his life lay in a flight to the south. In December 1769, therefore, he left England for good, and settled at Monte Nuovo, near Leghorn, which continued to be his home for the rest of his life. Here, in a happy revival of his spirits, he wrote *Humphry Clinker*, which Scott has aptly styled "the last, and, like music

Illustration by Cruikshank to "Peregrine Pickle"

sweetest in the close, the most pleasing of Smollett's books." It was published in 1771, and in September of the same year the author died, only fifty years of age, but already so dry and emaciated that, as he whimsically said, he might have passed for an Egyptian mummy. He was buried in the cemetery at Leghorn, overlooking the sea. Not much has been preserved of the personal history of Smollett, although he lived in the very age of memoirs. He was surly and harsh; he pursued his successful contemporaries with ferocious hostility; he gathered few or no friends about him. He was an honest man and a patriot, but he was wanting in the lovable qualities. He was capable, as Robertson experienced during an interesting interview, of being extremely polished and urbane upon occasion; but he found that, as a rule, the world expected him to resemble the ruffians and bullies that he drew, and he did not care to disappoint so reasonable a supposition.

Illustration by Cruikshank to "Roderick Random"

THE ARRIVAL OF MR. LISMAHAGO (FROM "HUMPHRY CLINKER").

Martin had not been gone half-an-hour, when we were joined by another character, which promised something extraordinary. A tall meagre figure, answering, with his horse, the description of Don Quixote mounted on Rozinante, appeared in the twilight at the inn door, while my aunt and Liddy stood at a window in the dining-room. He wore a coat, the cloth of which had once been scarlet, trimmed with Branderburgs, now totally deprived of their metal, and he had holster-caps and housing of the same stuff and same antiquity. Perceiving ladies at the window above, he endeavoured to dismount with the most graceful air he could assume: but the ostler neglecting to hold the stirrup, when he wheeled off his right foot, and stood with his whole weight on the other, the girth unfortunately gave way, the saddle turned, down came the cavalier on the ground, and his hat and periwig falling off, displayed a head-piece of various colours, patched and plastered in a woeful condition. The ladies, at the window above, shrieked with affright, on the supposition that the stranger had received some notable damage in his fall; but the greatest injury he had sustained arose from the dishonour of his descent, aggravated by the disgrace of exposing the condition of his cranium, for certain plebeians, that were about the door, laughed aloud, in the belief that the captain had got either a scald head, or a broken head, both equally opprobrious. He forthwith leaped up in a fury, and snatching one of his pistols, threatened to put the ostler to death, when another squall from the women checked his resentment. He then bowed to the window, while he kissed the butt-end of his pistol, which he replaced, adjusted his wig in great confusion, and led his horse into the stable.

With the work of these four novelists, whose best thoughts were given to fiction, were associated two or three isolated contributions to the novel, among which the *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Rasselas* are the most celebrated. Neither Johnson nor Goldsmith, however, would have adopted this form, if a direct and highly successful appeal to the public had not already been made by Richardson and Fielding. These masterly books were episodic; they have little importance in our general survey. Nor must we delay to describe the *Peter Wilkins* (1751) of Robert Paltock, with its beautiful

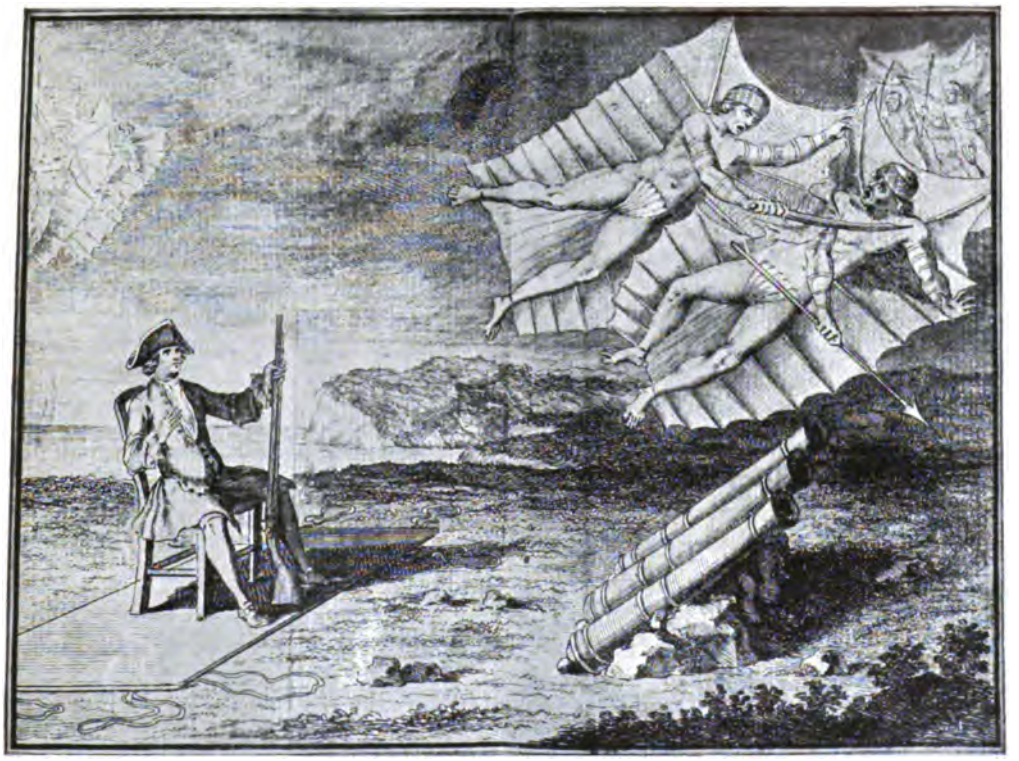


Illustration from Robert Paltock's "Peter Wilkins"

dream of a winged race of Glums and Gawries, nor the eccentric Socinian romance of *John Buncle*, 1756–66, of Thomas Amory, although each of these, in its isolated way, is a minor classic. We judge them as we judge the flood of novels which presently rushed forth in all the languages of Europe, as being the results of a discovery which the world owes to the great English pioneers. The novel, indeed, was the first gift of a prominent kind which the world owed to England. The French boudoir romance, as exemplified by Crébillon *fils*, faded out of existence when Richardson rose over the Continent. The lucidity, directness, and wholesomeness of this new species of fiction made a way for it at once; within a marvellously short space of time all Europe was raving over *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. The anti-

romantic novel swept heroic and picaresque fiction out of the field, and it was the uncommon good fortune of the humdrum old printer to prepare the way for Rousseau and Goethe, to be imitated by Voltaire, and to win the enthusiastic adulation of Diderot and of Marmontel, who preferred *Sir Charles Grandison* to all the masterpieces of antiquity. The type of novel invented in England about 1740–50 continued for sixty or seventy years to be the only model for Continental fiction; and criticism has traced on every French novelist, in particular, the stamp of Richardson, if not of Sterne and Fielding, while the Anglomania of Rousseau is patent to the superficial reader.

Samuel Johnson

After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

The literature which exercised so wide an influence, and added so greatly to the prestige and vital force of English manners of thought, is not to be disregarded as trivial. The introduction of the novel, indeed, was to intellectual life as epoch-making as the invention of railways was to social life: it added a vast and inexhaustibly rich province to the domain of the imagination. The discovery that a chronicle of events which never happened to people who never existed, may be made, not merely as interesting and probable, but practically as *true* as any record of historical adventure, was one of most far-reaching importance. It was what Fielding called "the prosai-comi-epos" of the age, invented for the ceaseless delight of those who had tasted the new pleasure of seeing themselves as others saw them. The realistic novel was as popular as a bit of looking-glass is among savages. It enabled our delighted forefathers to see what manner of men they were, painted without dazzling or "sub-fusc" hues, in the natural colours of life. For us the pathos of Richardson, the sturdy, manly sense of Fielding, the sensibility of Sterne, the unaffected humanity of Goldsmith, possess a perennial charm, but they cannot be to us quite what they were to those most enviable readers who not merely perused them for the first time, but had never conceived the possibility of seeing anything like them. That fresh eagerness we never can recover.

The complex age illustrated by such poets as Young, and such novelists as Fielding, found its fullest personal exponent in Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, not the greatest writer, indeed, in English literature, but perhaps the most massive figure of a man of letters. The gradual tendency of the century had more and more come to be concentrated upon attention to common sense, and in Johnson a character was developed, of noble intelligence, of true and tender heart, of lambent humour, in whose entire philosophy every impulse was subordinated to that negative virtue. Johnson became, therefore, the leading intellect of the country, because displaying in its quintessence the quality most characteristic of the majority of educated men and women. Common sense gave point to his wit, balance to his morality, a Tory limitation to his intellectual sympathy. He keeps the central path; he is as little indulgent to enthusiasm as to infidelity; he finds as little place in his life for mysticism as for coarse frivolity. *Vita fumus*, and it is not for man to waste his years in trying to weigh the smoke or puff it away; bravely and simply he must labour and acquiesce, without revolt, without speculation, in "all that human hearts endure." This virile hold upon facts, this attitude to conduct as a plain garment from which the last shred of the Shaftesbury gold-lace optimism had been torn, explains the astounding influence Johnson wielded during his lifetime. His contemporaries knew him to be thoroughly honest, profoundly intelligent, and yet permeated by every prejudice of the age. They loved to deal with facts, and no man had so large a stock of them at his disposal as Johnson.

Samuel Johnson

After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

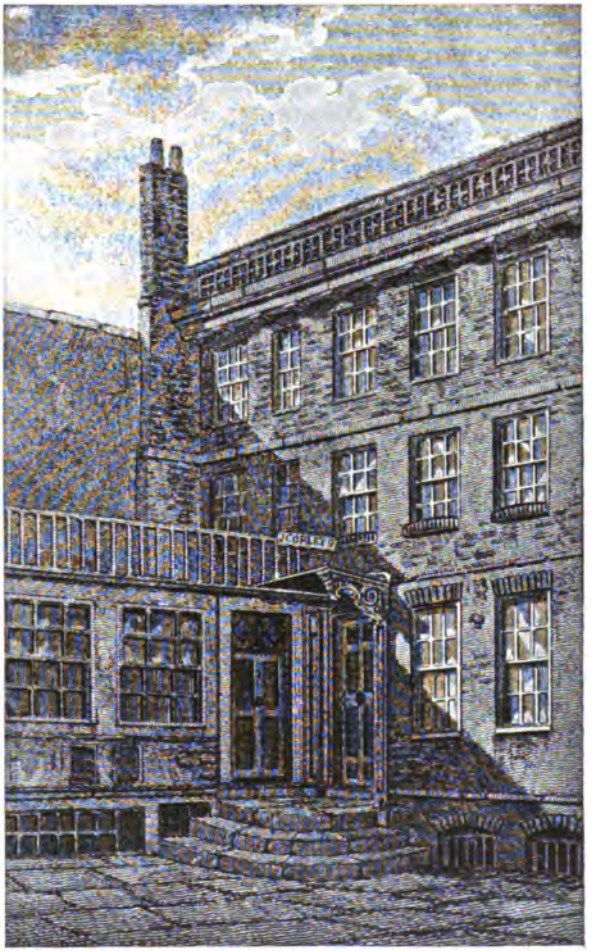
For nearly fifty years Johnson was occupied in literary composition. Yet his books are not so voluminous as such a statement would lead us to expect. It is doubtful whether, with a competency, Johnson would have written at all, for he was ponderously indolent, moving slowly, and easily persuaded to stop, loving much more to read, to ponder, and to talk than to write, and, indeed, during long periods of his career unable to put pen to paper. Of his

principal productions the most famous may be called occasional, for they were written suddenly, under a pressing need for money, in a jet of violent energy which was succeeded by prolonged inertia. He essayed every species of composition, and it cannot be said that he was unsuccessful in any, according to the estimate of the age. His two poems, satires imitated from Juvenal, are less "poetical," perhaps, in the recent sense than any writings of their reputation in the language, but the solidity and sententiousness of their couplets kept them moderately popular for more than half a century. As an essayist, it is less fair to judge Johnson by his *Ramblers* than by his lighter and less pompous *Idlers;* yet even the former were till lately habitually read. He lent his dignified and ponderous imagination to the task of producing fiction, and *Rasselas* takes its place among the minor classics of our tongue. Towards the end of his life Johnson came forward four times with a weighty pamphlet as completely outside the range of practical politics as those of Carlyle. He is also the writer of two diaries of travel, of sermons, of a tragedy, of certain critical ana—all of them, in the strict sense, occasional, and almost unprofessional.

Johnson's House in Inner Temple Lane

The only works on which Johnson can be said to have expended elaborate attention are his *Dictionary*, which scarcely belongs to literature, and his *Lives of the English Poets*. The latter, indeed, is his *magnum opus;* on it, and on it alone, if we except his reported sayings, the reputation of Johnson as a critic rests. This extremely delightful compendium can never cease to please a certain class of readers, those, namely, who desire intellectual stimulus rather than information, and who can endure the

dogmatic expression of an opinion with which they disagree. No one turns to Johnson's pages any longer to know what to think about Milton or Gray; no one any longer considers that Cowley was the first correct English poet, or that Edmund Smith was a great man. Half Johnson's selected poets are read no longer, even by students; many of them never were read at all. Mrs. Browning wittily remarked that "Dr. Johnson wrote the Lives of the Poets,—and left the poets out." What we seek in these delightful volumes is the entertainment to be obtained from the courageous exposition, the gay, bold decisiveness, the humour and humanity of the prodigious critic, self-revealed in his preferences and his prejudices. There are no "perhaps's" and "I think's"; all is peremptory and assertive; you take the judgment or you leave it, and if you venture to make a reservation, the big voice roars you down. This remarkable publication closes the criticism of the century; it is the final word of the movement which had been proceeding since 1660; it sums it up so brilliantly and authoritatively that immediate revolt from its principles was a matter of course. During the very same years Thomas Warton was publishing his *History of English Poetry*, in which all the features were found which Johnson lacked—broad and liberal study, an enthusiasm for romance, a sense of something above and beyond the rules of the critics, a breadth of real poetry undreamed of by Johnson. Warton knew his subject; Johnson did not. Warton prophesied of a dawning age, and Johnson stiffly contented himself with the old. Warton was accurate, painstaking, copious; Johnson was careless, indolent, inaccurate; yet, unfair as it seems, to-day everybody still reads Johnson, and no one opens the pages of Warton.



Johnson's House in Bolt Court, Fleet Street

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) was the eldest child of Michael Johnson, a bookseller of Lichfield, where the future lexicographer was born on the 18th of September 1709. From infancy he was afflicted with the scrofulous disease known as "king's evil," and in 1712 his mother (Sarah Ford) took him up to London to be "touched" by Queen Anne. It was the last time on which this superstitious performance was gone through. Johnson was sent to a dame's school in Lichfield, and then to the grammar school at Stourbridge. He was a model pupil, and he had read so much of an unusual kind, that when he proceeded to Oxford in December 1728 the Master of Pembroke told him he was "the best qualified for the university that he had ever known come there." Johnson, as is now ascertained, resided little more than a year at Oxford, although he kept his name on the books until 1731. His father died late in 1731, and Johnson found the business in a very reduced condition. He did not attempt, at least for any length of time, to keep on the book-shop; he became an usher in a school at Market Bosworth and other places, and tried to get literary work to do. His first book, a translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*, was printed anonymously at Birmingham in 1735. At the last-mentioned town he met with a widow, Mrs. Porter, "fat, flaring, and fantastic," whom he married, although she was nearly twice his age; in spite of her eccentricities she made her uncouth husband a good wife—"it was a love match on both sides," he said. The couple set up a school at Edial Hall, Lichfield, where David Garrick was one of their elder pupils. This school was a failure, and Johnson and Garrick came up to London together in 1737 to seek their fortunes. The early days of Johnson in town were deeply acquainted with the "ills which assail the scholar's life"; he was extremely poor, and in 1738 his tragedy *Irene*, on which he had built his hopes, was refused at Drury Lane. He joined the staff of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, however, and made a little money and more fame by his didactic poem of *London*. From 1740 to 1743 Johnson earned a scanty income as a parliamentary reporter; he was living most of this

Johnson's Birthplace at Lichfield

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SAMUEL JOHNSON.
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOHN OPIE

time in a garret in Exeter Street, Strand. He did other hack-work for people like Osborn the bookseller, of his quarrel with whom he afterwards gave Mrs. Thrale a succinct account—"Dearest lady, he was insolent, and I beat him; and he was a blockhead, and told of it." In 1743 that strange adventurer Richard Savage died, and in the following year Johnson published his *Life*. He was still, and for a long time to come, so miserably poor that he often could not show himself in public because of the shabbiness of his clothes. In 1747 he issued his *Plan of a Dictionary*, which he dedicated to Chesterfield, but with scant encouragement. In 1748 he wrote at Hampstead, and in 1749 published, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, a very fine work, which oddly enough failed to please the poetic taste of the day. At length, in February of the same year, the old tragedy of *Irene* was produced by Garrick at Drury Lane, and for the first time in his life Johnson tasted success; he received nearly £300. From

Grammar School at Lichfield

1750 to 1752 he was busily engaged in writing a bi-weekly periodical, *The Rambler*, which appears to have been faintly lucrative; it expired abruptly, probably because Johnson was unable to continue it owing to the condition of his wife, who, after years of "perpetual illness and perpetual opium," died a few days after the last *Rambler* appeared. A blind Welsh lady, Mrs. Williams, became the inmate of his house, and continued to live with him till her death thirty years later. The huge task of the *Dictionary* was completed in 1754, and Johnson received a little money, much reputation, and the degree of M.A. from the University of Oxford. His noble letter to Chesterfield, a masterpiece of manly irony, (though not published until 1790) belongs to 1755. But Johnson was now tired; he allowed his small resources soon to become exhausted, and he fell again into extreme indigence. We know little of his life until 1758, when we find him starting a new and more interesting periodical, *The Idler;* it appeared weekly for two years. Johnson's mother died, at the age of ninety, early in 1759, and he wrote his novel of *Rasselas* to pay for her funeral. He had now been living for some years in Gough Square, but he moved over to Staple Inn in March 1759. He made various changes of residence before settling, in 1761, in the

chambers in Inner Temple Lane, which he made so famous. His next labour was the editing of Shakespeare, in which he showed himself dilatory and perfunctory. But in 1762 Johnson had accepted from George III. a pension of £300, which was of immense importance to him, for it raised him above the carking anxiety of indigence, and above necessities of labour, which now, at the age of fifty-three, were intolerably irksome to him. In May 1763 Johnson became acquainted with Boswell, to whose devotion he owes so enormous a debt. He was, indeed, now gathering about him the friends who were the solace and delight of his old age, Goldsmith first, then Langton, Topham Beauclerk, Hawkins, Bathurst, Burke, Reynolds, and the Thrales; "The Club," in which most of these found a place, was formed in 1764. It was the kindness of these friends which was to soothe the next "twenty years of a life radically wretched." The Thrales, in particular, were full of hospitable kindness; he was a cultivated brewer, she, born Hester Lynch Salisbury (1741–1821), a lively young woman of quite unusual clearness of understanding. Johnson, for sixteen years, had a room in their house, at Streatham or at Southwark, always prepared for his arrival. In the autumn of 1765 Johnson's Shakespeare was at length issued in eight volumes to the subscribers, who did not conceal their disappointment; this is the poorest of his productions. Johnson had become languid, and, weary of writing, resolved to do what "good I can by my conversation." He now began to rule the empire of letters by his talk. It was not for five years that he was induced by political zeal to take up the pen again; he wrote several pamphlets, *The False Alarm* (1770), *Falkland's Islands* (1772), and *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), amongst others. After the age of sixty Johnson's health took a turn for the better, and he was probably never in so little physical distress as when, in the summer of 1773, he had the fortitude not merely to visit Scotland, but to undertake a perilous voyage among the Hebrides. He was encouraged to travel more; in 1774 he went with the Thrales to Wales; in 1775 the same friends took him to France. On his return he was made LL.D. by the University of Oxford; at the age of sixty-six, and not before, he becomes what all the world has learned to call him, Dr. Johnson. His highly comical and sensible controversy with "Ossian" MacPherson dates from this year; Johnson, in redundant spirits, purchased a cudgel, but MacPherson withdrew from the discussion. In these years Boswell's attendance upon his illustrious friend was very close, and we have a remarkably full portrait of Johnson's peculiarities. In 1776 he made the latest of his moves, into No. 8 Bolt Court, where he resided till he died. He had by this time gathered

Samuel Johnson

From an Engraving by Finden

Madam

Among the numerous addresses of condolence to which your great loss must have occasioned, be pleased to receive these from one whose name perhaps You have never heard, and to whom your Ladyship is known only by the reputation of your virtues, and to whom your Lord was known only by his kindness and beneficence.

Your Ladyship is now again summoned to exert that piety of which You once gave us a scale of pain and danger, so illustrious an example, and your Lord's beneficence may be still commemorated by those who wish his fortune inherit his virtues.

I hope to be forgiven the liberty which I take of informing your Ladyship, that Mr Mauritius Lowe, a son of your late Lord's father, had by my recommendation to your Lord, a pension of allowance of ten pounds, the last of which, was July 26, he was also

received, he was in daily hope of his recall Home, in Pleasant hopefulness that on October 26, he should have received the whole half-yearly bounty, when he was struck with the dreadful news of his Benefactor's death.

May I presume to hope that his worth, his wretchedness, and his merit, as much exceed his Lordship's charity, will continue to have the same effect upon those whom he has been bound, and that though he has lost one friend he may not yet be destitute. Your Ladyship's character cannot be exerted where it is wanted more: and to a mind like yours distress is a sufficient recommendation.

I hope to be allowed the honour of being,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's

most humble servant

Sam: Johnson.

Bolt court, Fleetstreet, London
Sept. 9. 1780

around him quite a group of poor applicants for his charity; at some periods there must have been as many as eight or ten of these queer dependents living in the house; he always treated them "with the same, or perhaps more, ceremonious civility" that he showed to people of fashion. General discontent was expressed at Dr. Johnson's "indolence," and in 1777 he was induced to undertake a literary enterprise of great importance, into which he threw himself with considerable energy. This was the collection of prefaces, now generally known as the *Lives of the English Poets*. These were not completed until 1781, and Johnson was actively employed upon them for four years. Valued friends gradually dropped away in death, first Goldsmith, then Garrick, then Thrale; he felt each of these bereavements bitterly, and his constitution began to break up. In June 1783, after a fatiguing visit to Oxford, he had a severe attack of paralysis, but it passed in a few weeks. His recovery was, however, only temporary, and all through 1784 he was declining. Nevertheless, in the autumn of that year, he contrived to visit Lichfield and some places in Derbyshire. He sank very gradually after his return to London in November, and passed away in perfect serenity on the 13th of December, after saying, "God bless you, my dear," to the beautiful Miss Morris, who came to bid him farewell. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and the pall was carried, amongst others, by Burke and Bennet Langton. The character of Johnson was courageous, sincere, and manly to a remarkable, almost to a typical, degree, and he was animated by a positive passion of human charity. He had many peculiarities, the picturesqueness of which has perhaps been exaggerated, but which have combined to make him one of the most striking figures in English history. His rolling walk, the twisting and flinging of his great unwieldy limbs, the scars on his face, the homeliness of his brown clothes and bluish wig, his loud voice and incessant animation of gesture—all these things have combined, under the hand of Boswell, to form a portrait which no one ever forgets. Johnson's conversation seems to have been not merely the most remarkable of his own age, but among the very finest of which any record has been preserved. Formidable and exhilarating in the extreme, the talk of Johnson, with its rapidity of movement, its surprises, its splendour of illustration, its weight of authority, and its sparkle of humour, was one of the main intellectual features of the middle of the eighteenth century.

Dr. Johnson in his Hebridean Costume

FROM "RASSELAS."

Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty Emperor in whose dominions the father of waters begins his course—whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abyssinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place where the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abyssinian princes was a spacious valley in the Kingdom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summit overhung the middle part. The only passage by which it could be entered was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it had long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massive that no man, without the help of engines, could open or shut them.

James Boswell

From an Engraving of the "Houghton" Portrait

FROM THE "LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD."

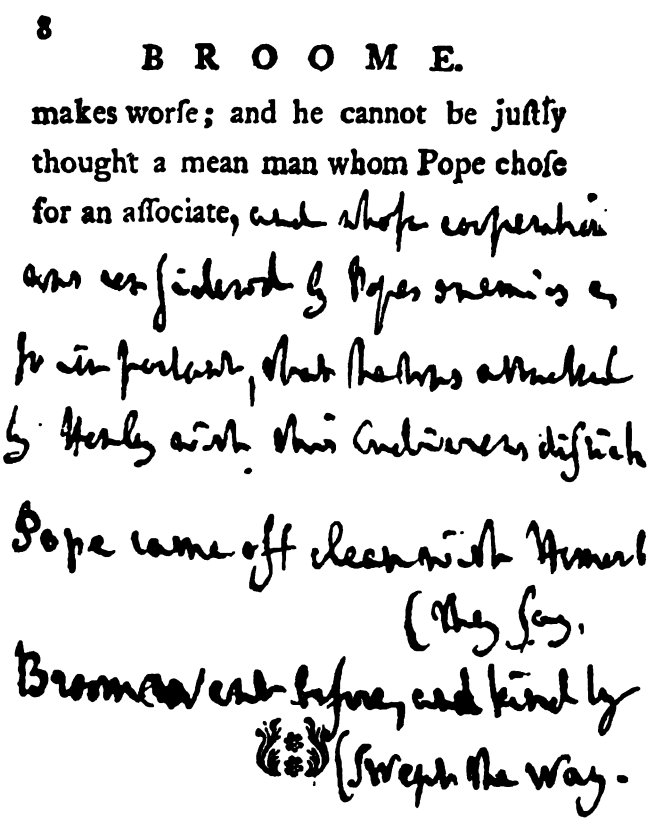
Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil became at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it: till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations when no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

The extraordinary vitality of Johnson is one of the most interesting phenomena in literary history. That the greater part of it did not exhale with the fading memory of his friends is due to the genius of his principal disciple. It has been customary to deny capacity of every kind to JAMES BOSWELL, who had, indeed, several of the characteristics of a fool; but the qualities which render the *Life of Johnson* one of the great books of the world are

not accidental, and it would be an equal injustice to consider them inherent in the subject. The life and letters of Gray, which Mason had published in 1775, gave Boswell a model for his form, but it was a model which he excelled in every feature. By Mason and Boswell a species of literature was introduced into England which was destined to enjoy a popularity that never stood higher than it does at this moment. Biographies had up to this time been perfunctory affairs, either trivial and unessential collections of anecdotes, or else pompous eulogies from which the breath of life was absent. But Mason and Boswell made their heroes paint their own portraits, by the skilful interpolation of letters, by the use of anecdotes, by the manipulation of the recollections of others; they adapted to biography the newly discovered formulas of the anti-romantic novelists, and aimed at the production of a figure that should be interesting, lifelike, and true.



8

BROOME.

makes worſe; and he cannot be juſtly thought a mean man whom Pope choſe for an aſſociate, and whoſe converſation was conſidered by Pope's friends as an improvement, that Pope was attacked by Oldmixon with this Endeavour diſtich

Pope came off clear with Arnall
(they ſay.
Broome crept before, and kind by
Sweph the Way.

Page of Corrected Proof of Johnson's "Lives"

It was a very happy accident which made Dr. Johnson the subject of the first successful essay in this species of portraiture. Boswell was a consummate artist, but his sitter gave him a superb opportunity. For the first time, perhaps, in the history of literature, a great leader of intellectual society was able after his death to carry on, unabated, and even heightened, the tyrannous ascendency of his living mind. The picturesqueness of Johnson's dictatorial personage, his odd freaks and pranks, his clearness of speech, his majestic independence of opinion, went on exercising their influence long after his death, and exercise it now. Still in the matchless pages of Boswell we see a living Johnson, blowing out his breath like a whale, whistling and clucking under the arguments of an opponent, rolling victoriously in his chair, often "a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation." Never before had the salient points in the character and habits of a man of genius been noted with

anything approaching to this exactitude and copiousness, and we ought to be grateful to Boswell for a new species of enjoyment.

James Boswell (1740–1795), the son of a Scotch judge and the heir to a good Lowland estate, was born at Auchinleck on the 29th of October 1740. He was educated for the bar at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and came up to London in 1760. His career in letters opened with some poor poetry. From boyhood he had formed an intense admiration for Johnson, and endeavoured to meet him directly he arrived

Samuel Johnson and James Boswell

From a Caricature by Thomas Rowlandson

WALKING UP THE HIGH STREET.

"*Mr. Johnson and I walked Arm in Arm up the High Street to my House in James Court: it was a dusky night. I could not prevent his being assailed by the Evening effluvia of Edinburgh*——

"*As we marched along he grumbled in my Ear, 'I smell you in the dark.'*"—Vide Journal, p. 13.

in England. It was not, however, until the 16th of May 1763, when he was twenty-two, that Boswell was presented to the great man by Davies the bookseller. He began, almost immediately, to study and to note down Johnson's conversation. But he could not, at this time, give Johnson his undivided attention. He was living in Germany in 1764, in Italy and Holland in 1765, and in Scotland until 1768, when he came up to London to publish his curious *Account of Corsica*. He now began to keep a close record of Johnson's doings and sayings, and from 1772 to Johnson's death the intimacy of the oddly-assorted pair of friends was unbroken. He was not at pains to make

James Boswell

After the Portrait by George Dance

himself equally beloved by all the great man's acquaintances. He was jealous of Goldsmith and ungenerous to Mrs. Thrale, and he forced Wilkes upon them much against their inclination. He was not an original member of "The Club," and Johnson had difficulty in contriving his election. Boswell, in short, was looked upon as an interloper. His measureless devotion to Johnson, however, his good nature, and his total lack of pride carried him through. He could not be checked or snubbed; if he was crushed, he popped up again with imperturbable enthusiasm, and in all companies his face was fixed on Johnson's like a sunflower on the sun. In the autumn of 1773 he had the luck to persuade Johnson to accompany him to the Hebrides. In 1775 he began to keep his terms at the Inner Temple, and next year he came into the Auchinleck estate, although his father was still alive. The death of Johnson in 1784 was an epoch in the life of Boswell. He set himself at once to arrange the materials which he had so long collected, but he was in no hurry to produce them. He permitted other writers to dash forward with premature Lives of Johnson — Cooke in 1784, Shaw in 1785, Mrs. Thrale in 1786, Hawkins in 1787; he waited in absolute confidence that the appearance of his two volumes would relegate all these audacious predecessors to an instant oblivion. He was quite right; his *Life of Johnson*, when it at length appeared in 1791, was hailed as the most interesting biography ever published, and it holds that position still after more than a hundred years. The rest of Boswell's career was insignificant. He was made Recorder of Carlisle; but he continued to reside and practise in the Temple. He died on the 19th of May 1795, and was buried at Auchinleck.

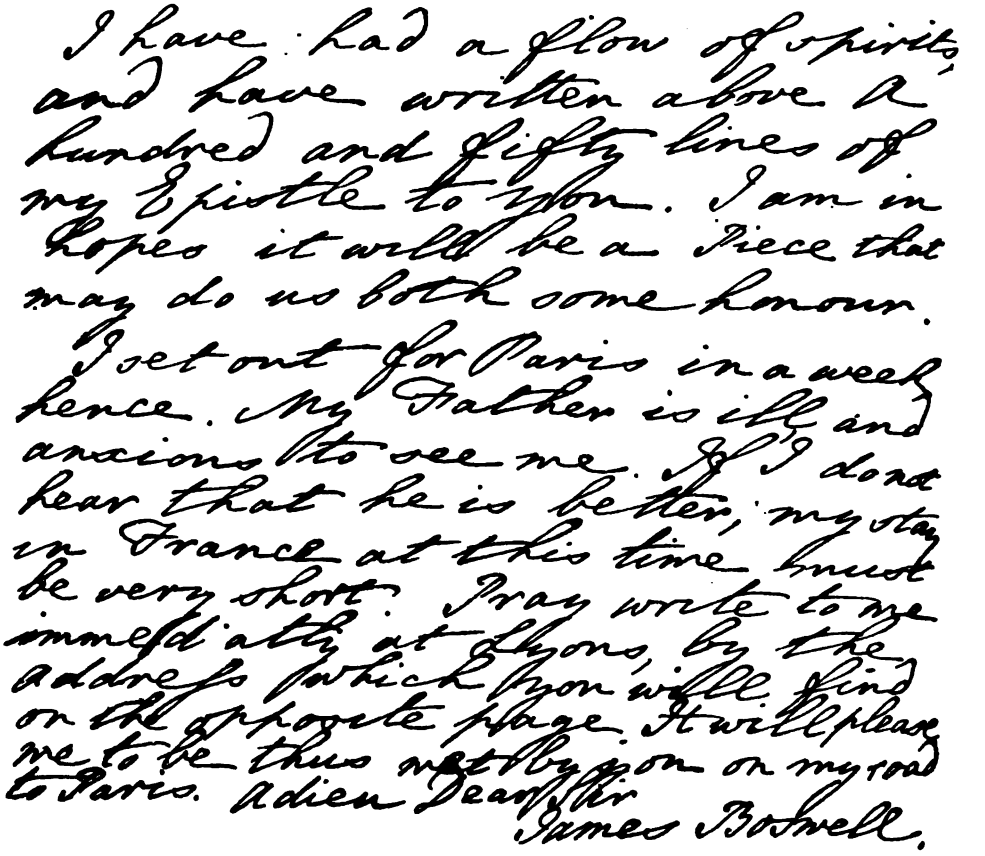
David Garrick
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Mrs. Thrale
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

FROM THE "LIFE OF DR. JOHNSON."

He had another particularity of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so that either his right or his left foot (I am not certain which) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion.

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backward and forward, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating, he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving half a whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen,


I have had a flow of spirits, and have written above a hundred and fifty lines of my Epistle to you. I am in hopes it will be a piece that may do us both some honour.

I set out for Paris in a week hence. My Father is ill and anxious to see me. If I dont hear that he is better, my stay in France at this time must be very short. Pray write to me immediately at Lyons, by the address which you will find on the opposite page. It will please me to be thus met by you on my road to Paris. Adieu Dear Sir

James Boswell.

Extract from a Letter of Boswell's to John Wilkes

and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too;* all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile.

Oliver Goldsmith.

By the side of Johnson, like an antelope accompanying an elephant, we observe the beautiful figure of OLIVER GOLDSMITH. In spite of Johnson's ascendency, and in spite of a friendship that was touching in its nearness, scarcely a trace of the elder companion is to be discovered in the work of the younger. Johnson's style is massive, sonorous, ponderous; enamoured of the pomp of language, he employs its heaviest artillery for trifles, and points his cannon at the partridge on the mountains. The word which Johnson uses is always the correct one so far as meaning goes, but it is often more weighty than the occasion demands, and more Latin. Hence it was, no doubt, that his spoken word, being more racy and more Saxon, was often more forcible than his printed word. There is no ponderosity about Goldsmith, whose limpid and elegant simplicity of style defies analysis. In that mechanical and dusty age he did not set up to be an innovator. We search in vain, in Goldsmith's verse or prose, for any indication of a consciousness of the coming change. He was perfectly contented with the classical traditions, but his inborn grace and delicacy of temper made him select the sweeter and the more elegant among the elements of his time. As a writer, purely, he is far more enjoyable than Johnson; he was a poet of great flexibility and sensitiveness; his single novel is much fuller of humour and nature than the stiff *Rasselas;* as a dramatist he succeeded brilliantly in an age of failures; he is one of the most perfect of essayists. Nevertheless, with all his perennial charm, Goldsmith, in his innocent simplicity, does not attract the historic eye

Oliver Goldsmith

From a Caricature by Bunbury

Sir.

Recd 11 Jan? 1759

I know of no misery but a gaol to which my own imprudences and your Letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable this three or four weeks, and by Heavens, request it as a favour, as a favour that may prevent somewhat more fatal. I have been some years struggling with a wretched being, with all that contempt which indigence brings with it with all those strong passions which make contempt insupportable. What then has a gaol that is formidable. I shall at least have the society of wretches, and such is to me true society. I tell you again, and again I am now neither able nor willing to pay you a farthing, but I will be punctual to any appointment you or the taylor shall make; Stay for at least I do not act the sharper, since unable to pay my debts one way I would willingly give some security another. No sir, had I been a sharper, had I been possessed of such good nature and native generosity I might surely now have been in better circumstances. I am guilty I own of meanesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it, my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence but not with any remorse for being a villain, that may be a character you unjustly charge me with. Your books I can assure you are neither pawned nor sold, but in the custody of a friend ~~from~~ from whom my necessities obliged me to borrow some money whatever becomes of my person, you shall have them in a month. It is very possible both the reports you have heard and your own suggestions may have brought you false information with respect to my character it is very possible that the man whom you now regard

Letter from Goldsmith

with ostentation may inwardly burn with grateful resentment; it is very possible that upon a second perusal of the Letter I sent you you may see the workings of a mind strongly agitated with gratitude and jealousy, if such circumstances should appear at first have incentive till my book with Mr. Dodsley shall be published, and then perhaps you may see the bright side of a mind when my professions shall not appear the dictates of necessity but of choice. You seem to think Doctor Milner knew me not. Perhaps so; but he was a man I shall ever honour; but I have friendship only with the dead! I ask pardon for taking up so much time nor shall I add to it by any other professions than that I am Sir your Humble Servt

Oliver Goldsmith.

P. S. I shall expect impatiently the result of your resolutions.

as the good giant Johnson does, seated for forty years in the undisputed throne of letters.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) was the youngest of the five children of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, curate of Pallas in County Longford, where he was born on the 10th of November 1728. When he was two years old his father was made rector of Kilkenny West, and took a house in the village of Lissoy. To his early teachers, the boy Oliver seemed "impenetrably stupid." At Ardagh, in his boyish days, he had the adventure on which the plot of *She Stoops to Conquer* was afterwards founded. In June 1744 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar; his university life was extremely un-illustrious, and he spent much of it in "perpetually lounging about the college gate." After running away and being nearly starved in 1747, he settled down to work a little, and took his B.A. in 1749. Goldsmith was now urged by his family to take orders; after he had idly prepared for this unwelcome step for some two years, he was rejected by the Bishop of Elphin. He tried to be a tutor, to emigrate to America, to be a law-student; at last, in 1752, he went to Edinburgh to train for medicine. In 1753 he started for the Continent, and seems to have studied at Leyden for two years. In 1755 he wandered off upon his travels, having obtained—it is alleged—a medical degree at Louvain. He begged, fiddled, and wheedled his way all over the West of Europe through 1755, and returned to Dover, with "no more than a few halfpence," in February of the following year. His struggles to make a living were pathetic; he was an apothecary's assistant, a low comedian, an usher in a country school, finally "a physician in a humble way" in Southwark. About 1756 he had the good fortune to meet Samuel Richardson, who employed him as a press-corrector, and probably first led his thoughts to literature as a profession. He next, however, consented to assist a schoolmaster at Peckham, where he became acquainted with Griffiths the publisher, who gave him employment on the *Monthly Review*. In 1758 Goldsmith, under the pseudonym of James Willington, printed his first book, *Memoirs of a Protestant*, translated from the French of Marteilhe. Soon after this he obtained, but did not take up, a medical appointment to Coromandel. He was afterwards rejected at Surgeons' Hall as hospital mate. He was now thirty, and "eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study had worn him down." He lodged for five months over Griffiths' shop in Paternoster Row; about September 1757 he moved into a garret near Salisbury Square. Then—after

Goldsmith's Lodgings in Green Arbour Court

retiring to Peckham for a while—he took lodgings in Green Arbour Court; here in 1759 he produced the *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, his earliest original book. The publication of this little work introduced Goldsmith to the booksellers, and he began to contribute prose and verse to several periodicals. From the miscellaneous labour which gradually made him prominent, there stands out *The Citizen of the World*, which was published in 1762. About this time Goldsmith's acquaintance with Johnson began, and his fame also, for Johnson immediately perceived the genius of this obscure and painful hack-writer; "Dr. Goldsmith," he said, "is one of the first men we now have as an author." He soon justified his friend's judgment, for *The Traveller* in 1764 placed him in the front rank of the poets of the day, and enjoyed instant and substantial success.[1] Goldsmith collected his *Essays* in 1765, and, appearing in purple silk small-clothes and a scarlet roquelaure, endeavoured to resume his labours as a physician, but he did not contrive to secure a practice, and returned to literature. As far back as 1762 Johnson had carried off and sold for the author's benefit, a novel which appeared at length, in 1766, as *The Vicar of Wakefield*; this was recognised as a masterpiece immediately. The author, nevertheless, indolently returned to that miscellaneous scribbling which barely supported him with food and the gay clothes in which he delighted. By the close of 1767, however, he had in rehearsal at Covent Garden a comedy, *The Good Natur'd Man*, which was brought out in January following, and enjoyed a partial success. Goldsmith was present at the first performance "in a suit of Tyrian bloom, satin grain, and garter-blue silk breeches," but afterwards burst out a-crying because one low scene with bailiffs was hissed; he made, however, £500 by this comedy. He thought the sum inexhaustible, and he moved into Brick Court, Middle Temple, where he furnished a set of chambers luxuriously. At the same time

THE

VICAR

OF

WAKEFIELD:

A TALE.

Suppoſed to be written by HIMSELF.

Sperate miſeri, cavete fœlices.

VOL. I.

SALISBURY:

Printed by B. COLLINS,

For F. NEWBERY, in Pater Noſter-Row, London.

MDCCLXVI.

[1] In 1902 a curious first draft of this poem, entitled *A Prospect of Society*, and bearing no date, was discovered by Mr. Bertram Dobell.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH,

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY A PUPIL OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

he was beginning the series of lively school-books—*Animated Nature*, *Roman History*, and *History of England*—which were to enjoy so constant a popularity. Thus engaged, he reached the year 1770, when his poem of *The Deserted Village* appeared. He then went off to Paris with Mrs. Horneck and her lovely daughter, "the Jessamy Bride." There is not much more to chronicle in the life of Goldsmith, except the charming incidents of his friendship with Johnson and Reynolds, and the production of *She Stoops to Conquer* in March 1773. His last poem, *Retaliation*, seems to have been written in February 1774, but before it could be printed the poet was gone. He suffered from a local disorder, and though being treated by a skilful physician, insisted on taking a quack medicine, under the influence of which he sank, in his chambers at Brick Court, on the 4th of April 1774. He was buried in the churchyard of the Temple, but Johnson wrote for Westminster Abbey a celebrated and splendid epitaph. His charming poem, *The Haunch of Venison*, was published posthumously in 1776. Goldsmith died in debt, and his fever, it was believed, was exasperated by anxiety. "But," as Johnson said, "let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man." It was his nature to swing between the extremes of poverty and extravagance, and he could never have been "comfortably off." From a lad, and to the end, he had a singular passion for brilliant and expensive clothes. Goldsmith was candour itself, and could no more conceal his vanity, envy, and levity than he could his generosity, enthusiasm, and sweetness of temper. He had great simplicity, and none of those artifices by which men protect themselves from the censure of the world. When all his faults are told, he was the most lovable of men.

Olivia ill-used by the Landlady

From "The Vicar of Wakefield." Edition 1780.

From "The Vicar of Wakefield."

My wife and daughters, happening to return a visit to neighbour Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by a limner, who travelled the country and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and, notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having therefore engaged the limner,—for what could I do?—our next deliberation was to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them; and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to

have something in a brighter style, and after many debates at length came to a unanimous resolution of being drawn together, in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel: for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was desired not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side; while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green Joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be dressed out with an hat and white feather. Our taste so much pleased the Squire that he insisted on being put in as one of the family, in the character of Alexander the Great, at Olivia's feet. This was considered by us all as an indication of his desire to be introduced into the family; nor could we refuse his request.

Illustration by Stothard to "The Vicar of Wakefield"

The Emigrants
Illustration by Stothard to "The Deserted Village"

The Deists. Through the first half of the eighteenth century, those who speculated with any freedom on the principles of religion and on its relation to conduct were loosely classed together as deists. In its general denunciation of independent thought, the age made no distinction between the optimistic rationalists, who proceeded from Shaftesbury, and philosophic scepticism of a critical or even destructive kind. Those who approach the subject from

THE SOCIAL EVENING.

Illustration by Rowlandson for "The Vicar of Wakefield."

the purely literary standpoint, as we do in these pages, are in danger of underrating the intellectual importance of this undermining of faith, because it was conducted by men whose talent and whose command of style were insufficient to preserve their writings. On the other hand, all the most eminent and vital authors combine to deride and malign the deists and to persuade us of their insignificance. When we see Swift, in his magnificent irony, descend like an eagle upon such an intellectual shrewmouse as Collins, whose principal modern advocate describes him as "always slipshod in style and argument, and tedious in spite of his brevity," we think the contest too unequal to be interesting. Nor does a rapid literary survey afford us occasion to dilate on such very hackney writers as Toland and Tindal, Whiston and Chubb.

Matthew Tindal
After the Portrait by B. Dandridge

The lives of the deists were generally obscure and sometimes dishonoured. Society looked down upon them with a contempt that was occasionally deserved. **John Toland** (1670–1722) was practically hunted out of England for free-thinking, in spite of the encouragement of Locke, and afterwards of Shaftesbury. He was driven to the life of a hackney author. **Matthew Tindal** (1653–1733) was an object of aversion to the authorities of Oxford, where he spent the greater part of his life as a Fellow of All Souls'. He made the High Church party the object of his unceasing attacks, and was rewarded with the reputation of a glutton and a debauchee. In **William Whiston** (1667–1752) we meet with a more learned mind and a more attractive person. His autobiography reveals him, as Sir Leslie Stephen has pointed out, as a sort of Vicar of Wakefield. He lectured on scientific subjects with great

William Whiston
After the Portrait by Mrs. Hoadley

pertinacity, and his lenient views on prophecy and inspiration scandalised those more thoroughgoing sceptics, **Thomas Chubb** (1679–1747) and **Anthony Collins** (1676–1729). The latter was the most daring of all the deists, and the most vehemently attacked. It was he who was willing to admit, by a vast concession, that St. Paul was "a man of sense and a gentleman." All these authors claimed intellectual descent from Locke, who would have repudiated the paternity.

The Historians

Towards the middle of the century, however, the habit of mind engendered by the humble, but sometimes entirely sincere, destructive deists, bore fruit in a species of literature which they had not dreamed of. There can be little question that the progress of critical speculation, the tendency to take obvious things for granted no longer, but to discuss their phenomena and distinguish their bases, led to the happiest results in the province of history. To the period which we have now reached belong three historians of high rank—all three, as it was long believed, of the very highest rank—Hume, Robertson, Gibbon. If modern taste no longer places the first two of these in quite so exalted a position as the eighteenth century did, each, at any rate, so far surpassed any previous rival as to be considered in another class. In the trio we do not hesitate to recognise the pioneers of a new kind of literature, the earliest scientific historians of the English school. Till 1753, history in England had meant no more than the compilation of memoirs; it was now to be a branch of creative literature, carefully constructed and subjected to wholesome criticism.

David Hume.

The eldest of these historians, DAVID HUME, began by the publication of philosophical treatises and passed on to be an essayist in a broader and less technical field. His studies in the British constitution and his inquiries into political precedents led him gradually to attempt a History of Great Britain from the Union to his own day. The volume containing *James I. and Charles I.* produced an extraordinary sensation. Hume's long practice in philosophy had prepared him to excel in the specious presentment of facts, and the point of view which he chose to adopt was novel, and calculated to excite a great deal of discussion. His book was read with as much avidity as a novel by Richardson or Fielding—a result which was aided by the simplicity and elegance of his style, which proceeds, limpid, manly, and serene, without a trace of effort. The *History* was concluded by a sixth volume in 1762, and Hume lived on for fourteen years more, dying in the enjoyment of an uncontested fame, as the greatest of modern historians.

This position it would be absurd to say that he has maintained. Hume had little of the more recently developed conscientiousness about the use of materials. If he found a statement quoted, he would indolently adopt it without troubling to refer to the original document. He was willing to make lavish use of the collections of Thomas Carte (1686–1754), a laborious and unfortunate predecessor of his, whose Jacobite prejudices had concealed his considerable pretensions as an historical compiler. Carte died just when Hume's first volume appeared, and this fact perhaps saved Hume from some unpleasant animadversions. Modern critics have shown that Hume's pages

swarm with inaccuracies, and that, what is a worse fault, his predilections for Tory ideas led him to do wilful injustice to the opponents of arbitrary power. All this, however, is little to the point; Hume is no longer appealed to as an authority. He is read for his lucid and beautiful English, for the skill with which he marshals vast trains of events before the mental eye, for his almost theatrical force in describing the evolution of a crisis. If we compare his work from this point of view with all that had preceded it in English literature, we shall see how eminent is the innovation we owe to Hume. He first made history readable.

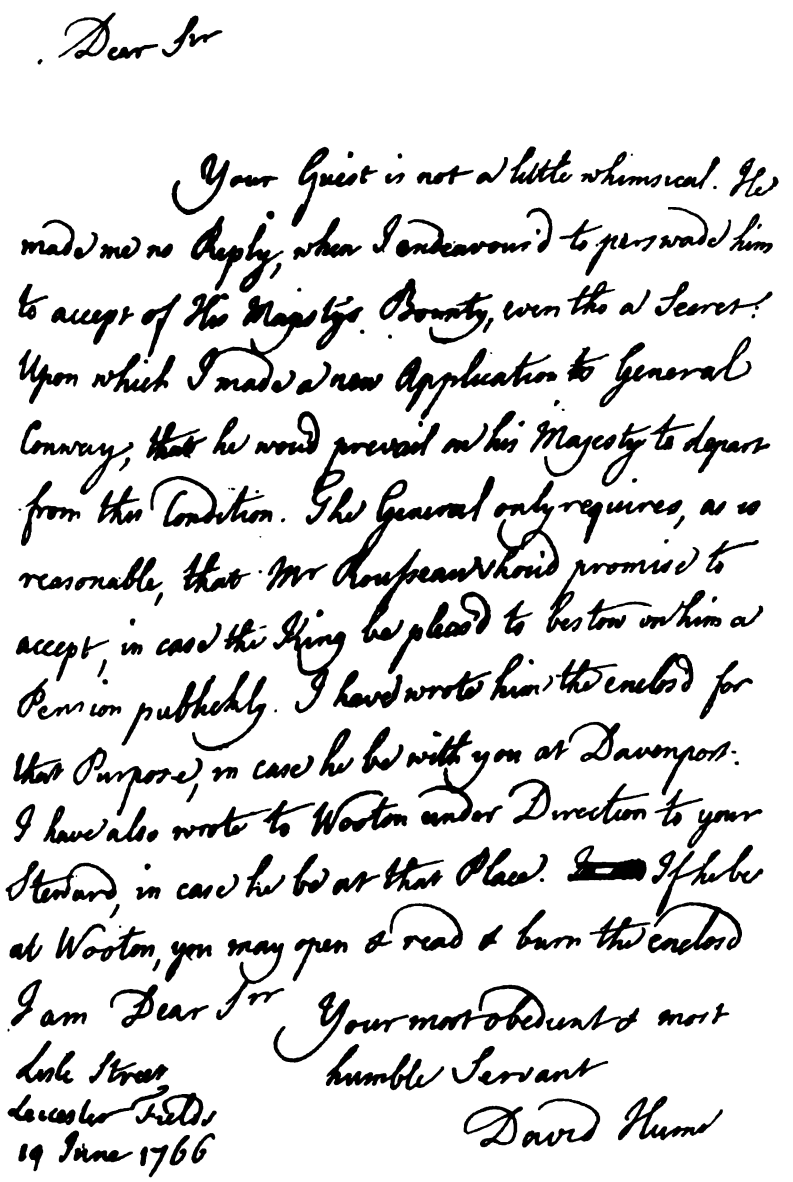
David Hume (1711–1776) was the second son and third child of a small Scotch laird, Joseph Hume or Home, of Ninewells in Berwickshire, at the very edge of England; but he was born, on the 26th of April 1711, in Edinburgh. During his infancy his father died, and his mother, "a woman of singular merit," brought up her three children as well as she might at Ninewells. David Hume showed no precocity of intelligence, and his mother described him as "a fine, good-natured creature, but uncommon weak-minded." Nothing definite is known about his education. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three he seems to have lived in apparent idleness at Ninewells, but he was already a deep student of the classics, and was meditating a revolution in moral philosophy. In 1734 he went over to France, and resided there three years, mainly among the Jesuits at La Flèche. Here he wrote the *Treatise of Human Nature*, his first work, which remained unpublished, however, until 1739. Two years before this Hume had returned to Ninewells, where he buried himself for several years in study and in philosophical composition. His *Essays, Moral and Political*, appeared anonymously in Edinburgh in 1741 and 1742. Although his name was not given to the public, his writings began to be appreciated by men like Hutcheson, Butler, and the precocious Adam Smith. It is difficult to understand, however, in what mode the little ancestral estate in Berwickshire was made to produce a livelihood for the Hume family; it became imperative at last that David should do something to earn money. Hence, at the age of thirty-four, he consented to become tutor to an imbecile and mean young nobleman, the Marquis of Annandale. Hume bore

David Hume
After the Portrait by James Ramsay

this bondage for twelve months, and then threw it up to become secretary to General St. Clair, whom he accompanied on the disastrous expedition to L'Orient. Two years later the same general took Hume with him on his embassy to Austria and Italy. Hume was seen at Turin in 1748, "disguised in scarlet" and wearing his uniform "like a grocer of the train-bands"; his could never have been a military figure. While he was in Italy his *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* were published. He returned to England in 1749, to be met by the news of his mother's death; he rejoined his brother and sister at Ninewells for three more noiseless years, and devoted himself to composition. His *Enquiry concerning Morals* appeared in 1751, and his *Political Discourses* in 1752. His *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, although withheld from the press until 1779, belong to this period. Hume was now famous; he described himself, in 1751, as possessing, besides a competency, "order, frugality, a strong sense of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabated love of study." He determined to move with his sister into Edinburgh, and accordingly he took a great house in the Lawnmarket. He presently began "a work which will occupy me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Britain from the Union of the Crowns to the present time." In January 1752 Hume was elected Librarian to the Advocates, and the outcry caused by this modest appointment shows that the charge of infidelity had already been raised against him. The ladies, however, were violently Hume's partisans, and one of them "broke off all commerce with her lover because he voted against" the philosopher. The collected edition of his *Essays and Treatises*, in four volumes, increased Hume's popularity in 1753 and 1754, and in the latter year the first volume of the *History of Great Britain* appeared. Curiously enough, although it was widely read from the first, it was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation. When this outburst of fanatical criticism subsided the sale became very large, and the second volume, in 1756, was still more favourably received. Hume's famous *Natural History of Religion* was published in 1757, and he now resigned his post as the Advocates' Librarian, that he might devote himself without interruption to literature. He was living quietly in London during the greater part of 1758 and 1759, and in Edinburgh again until 1763. Lord Hertford then persuaded him to accompany him as secretary on his embassy to Paris, where Hume was received with enthusiasm; very comical accounts of his behaviour under the process of lionising were given by Lord Charlemont and Madame d'Epinay. He gave great satisfaction to Lord Hertford, who secured him a pension of £400 a year, and in January 1766 Hume returned to London, bringing Rousseau with him. In 1767 he became Under-Secretary of State, a post which he held long enough to be able to retire to Edinburgh in August 1769 with a pension of £1000 a year, and to build a house in a new street which has ever since borne in his honour the name of "St. David's." He occupied himself in adding slowly to his History, and in "softening and expunging many villainous seditious Whig strokes which had crept into it," for

Lord Hertford
From an Engraving

Hume was growing a passionate Tory in his old age. He retained his good-humour and an uncommon degree of cheerful health until 1775, when he began to suffer from an internal hæmorrhage, which exhausted him, but happily was attended by very little pain. He met death with extraordinary simplicity and courage, ardent and gay to the last, without repining, as one totally detached from life. The end came on the 25th of August 1776, and his body, followed by a great mob of all that constituted the society of Edinburgh, was buried on the Calton Hill. Hume was a very fat and somewhat clumsy little man, with "a broad, unmeaning face"; he never married, although much courted by the ladies. His character was serene and cheerful to an eminent degree; he was looked upon with horror by the orthodox as a dangerous infidel, but in truth he was exactly what he merrily described himself as being — a sober, discreet, virtuous, regular, quiet, good-natured man of a bad reputation.



Dear Sir

Your Guest is not a little whimsical. He made me no Reply, when I endeavour'd to perswade him to accept of His Majesty's Bounty, even tho' a Secret: Upon which I made a new Application to General Conway, that he would prevail on his Majesty to depart from this Condition. The General only requires, as 'tis reasonable, that Mr Rousseau should promise to accept, in case the King be pleas'd to bestow on him a Pension publickly. I have wrote him the enclosed for that Purpose, in case he be with you at Davenport: I have also wrote to Wooton under Direction to your Steward, in case he be at that Place. [redacted] If he be at Wooton, you may open & read & burn the enclosed

I am Dear Sir Your most obedient & most humble Servant

Leicester Fields
19 June 1766

David Hume

Letter from Hume in Reference to his Quarrel with Rousseau

Hume's Character of Himself.

To conclude historically with my own character, I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open,

social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched or even attacked by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct; not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability.

I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

William Robertson.

Ten years younger than Hume, there can be no question that WILLIAM ROBERTSON owed his initiation as a writer to the more famous philosopher. When still a minister in a parish in Edinburgh, he produced his *History of Scotland*, in which he dealt with the half-century preceding the point where Hume began. This was the first, and remained the most famous, of a series of historical works which achieved a success the incidents of which read to us now as almost fabulous. If the record can be believed, Robertson was the British author who, of all in the eighteenth century, was continuously the best paid for what he wrote. In Robertson the faults as well as the merits of Hume were exaggerated. His style, with a certain Gallic artificiality, was nevertheless extremely brilliant and graceful, and in the finish of its general summaries surpassed that of the elder historian. But Robertson was still more unwilling than Hume to turn to the original sources of knowledge, still more content to take his facts second-hand, and not less superficial in his estimate of the forces underlying the movements of political and social history. It may be doubted whether the exercise of such research as we think inevitable for such a task, and as both Hume and Robertson disdained, might not have spoiled that brilliant, if always inadequate, evolution which so deeply fascinated their contemporaries, and may still, for a while, dazzle ourselves. What they wrote was not so much history in the exact sense, as a philosophical survey of events, in which they thought it not admissible only, but proper, to tincture the whole with the colour of their own convictions or political views. They were, in fact, empirics, who prepared the world of readers for genuine scientific history, and the founder of the latter was Gibbon.

William Robertson (1721–1793) was the son of the minister of Borthwick in Mid-Lothian, where he was born on the 19th of September 1721. He was trained at Dalkeith School and Edinburgh University, presenting at both a model of industry and accomplishment. His father was promoted to the Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, and the son was appointed, at the age of twenty-two, minister of Gladsmuir in East Lothian. He was hardly settled in the manse before the death of his father and his mother, within a few hours of one another, threw the entire burden of a brother

and six sisters on his hands. Robertson possessed signal energy and elevation of character; he did not shrink from his responsibilities, and by sheer ability he soon rose to a position of high influence in the Church of Scotland. Meanwhile, as early as 1753, he had begun to collect materials for a great literary enterprise, and in 1759 he issued in two volumes his celebrated *History of Scotland*. This brought him in much honour, money, and prestige, but although tempted to come up to London, he did not allow the flattery of his new admirers to interfere with the noiseless conduct of his life. He remained at his ecclesiastical post in Edinburgh, and he leisurely set about his *History of Charles V.*, which appeared in 1769 in three volumes. Subsequently he gave his attention, with less brilliant success, to the histories of America and of India. In his own age Robertson was held the equal of Hume and of Gibbon, each of whom, indeed, he excelled in the purely material parts of success. Industrious, serviceable, and wholly unpretentious, Robertson made no enemies even as historiographer for Scotland. His famous phrase about the duty of not going to see stage plays—"it is sacred on me, but not obligatory on others"—exemplifies the prudence and candour of his mind. After a life of extreme contentment, Robertson died, where he had lived so long, in Edinburgh, on the 11th of June 1793.

William Robertson
After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)

To EDWARD GIBBON, who timidly deprecated comparison with Robertson and Hume, criticism is steadily awarding a place higher and higher above them. He is, indeed, one of the great writers of the century, one of those who exemplify in the finest way the signal merits of the age in which he flourished. The book by which he mainly survives, the vast *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, began to appear in 1776, and was not completed until 1788. It was at once discovered by all who were competent to judge, that here was a new thing introduced into the literature of the world. Mézeray and Voltaire had written in French, Hume and Robertson in English,

historical works which had charming qualities of the rhetorical order, but which did not pass beyond the rudimentary stage of history, in which the hasty compilation of documents, without close investigation of their value, took the place of genuine and independent research. At length in Gibbon, after a life of forty years mostly spent in study and reflection, a writer was found who united "all the broad spirit of comprehensive survey with the thorough and minute patience of a Benedictine." After long debate, Gibbon fixed upon the greatest historical subject which the chronicle of the world supplied; undaunted by its extreme obscurity and remoteness, he determined to persevere in investigating it, and to sacrifice all other interests and ambitions to its complete elucidation. The mysterious and elaborate story of the transition from the Pagan to the Christian world might well have daunted any mind, but Gibbon kept his thoughts detached from all other ideas, concentrating his splendid intellect on this vast and solitary theme, until his patience and his force moved the mountain, and "the encyclopædic history," as Freeman calls it, "the grandest of all historical designs," took form and shape in six magnificent volumes.

Edward Gibbon

After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Some modern critics have found the attitude of Gibbon unsympathetic, his manner cold and superficial, his scepticism impervious to the passion of religious conviction. We may admit that these charges are well founded, and set them down to the credit of the age in which he lived, so averse to enthusiasm and ebullition. But to dwell too long on these defects is to miss a recognition of Gibbon's unique importance. His style possesses an extraordinary pomp and richness; ill adapted, perhaps, for the lighter parts of speech, it is unrivalled in the exercise of lofty and sustained heroic narrative. The language of Gibbon never flags; he walks for ever as to the clash of arms, under an imperial banner; a military music animates his magnificent descriptions of battles, of sieges, of panoramic scenes of antique civilisation. He understood, as few historical writers have done, how much the reader's enjoyment of a sustained narrative depends on the appeal to his visual sense. Perhaps he leaned on this strength of his style too much, and sacrificed the abstract to the concrete. But the book is so deeply grounded on personal accurate research, is the result of reflection at once so bold and so broad, with so extraordinary an intuition selects the correct aspect where several points of view were possible, that less than any

other history of the eighteenth century does the *Decline and Fall* tend to become obsolete, and of it is still said, what the most scientific of historians said only a generation ago, "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) was the eldest son of a country gentleman of good family. He was born at Putney on the 27th of April 1737; of the seven children of his parents he was the only one who survived infancy, and his own health was so miserable that it was impossible to subject him to any regular course of education. He suffered greatly, and he afterwards attributed the preservation of his life to the devoted care of his aunt, Catherine Porten. Shut out from the ordinary channels of learning, Gibbon read with an "indiscriminate appetite which subsided by degrees into the historic line." At the age of fifteen a great and unexpected improvement took place in his health, and his nervous disorders vanished. He was immediately sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he passed fourteen months, "the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life. To the University of Oxford," he says, "I acknowledge no obligation." He became greatly attracted to theological disquisition, and in 1753, in the beginning of his seventeenth year, he "fell by the noble hand" of Bossuet, and was privately admitted into the Church of Rome. He could not return to Oxford, and his father instantly hurried him over to Switzerland, where he was placed in the charge of a Protestant pastor at Lausanne. It took a whole year and a half to convert him back to Calvinism, but at the close of 1754 "the articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream," and he received the sacrament in the Protestant church. His intellectual progress at Lausanne was steady and brilliant; Gibbon soon advanced beyond the speed and measure of his tutor, who wisely, he says, "left me to my genius." Before he left Lausanne, in April 1758, he had made a survey of the Latin classics, which was neither hasty nor superficial, and had laid the foundation of a study of Greek literature. In 1757 he met Susanne Curchod, the beauty of Lausanne, and spoke to her in "the voice of truth and passion"; but his father "would not hear of this strange alliance," and Gibbon himself was destitute and therefore helpless. "After a painful struggle, I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son." The lady became famous as Madame Necker, and Gibbon never indulged again in any dream of matrimonial felicity. After five years of retired and happy mental training in Lausanne, during which time Gibbon lost for life all the insular prejudices of the race, his father abruptly summoned him to England. His father welcomed him "on terms of easy and equal politeness," but he had married a second time; his step-mother, however, proved a cultivated woman and a delightful friend. In 1761 Gibbon published in French an *Essay on the Study of Literature*, which he had composed in Switzerland. He now appears to us in the incongruous capacity of the acting colonel of a militia regiment of grenadiers; at first the exercises of the

Edward Gibbon
From the 1796 Edition of his "Works"

field were interesting to one who already intended to be a military historian, but he was soon wearied and disgusted with the toil and the company. When the militia were disbanded in the last days of 1762, Gibbon did not conceal his satisfaction. He lost no time in leaving England, and spent four months in Paris, before settling again in Lausanne, where he spent the remainder of 1763 in preparing for a study of the antiquities of Italy. He then went south, and in his memorable words, "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind." In the summer of 1765 he

The Villa Diodati, near Lausanne

returned to England, eager to begin his colossal task, but the time and his own genius were not ripe for it. He occupied himself on various schemes, which came to nothing, until 1770, when his father died at Buriton, leaving an encumbered estate. Gibbon moved into London, where he lived very quietly, and now with astonishing concentration of purpose set himself to the construction of his great history; the first volume was finished in 1773 and published three years later. The author was unknown to the world, and even his acquaintances, like Horace Walpole, had "never suspected the extent of his talents." Three large editions were sold off in a few weeks, and Gibbon's position was assured. He went over to Paris, and there was so much fêted that it was "quite a struggle to get him." During these years (1774–80) Gibbon was in Parliament as M.P. for Liskeard, and from 1779 to 1783 he held the lucrative appointment of a Lord of Trade. When Lord North went out of office Gibbon found his income very sensibly reduced, and he determined to leave England. In September 1783 he joined his friend Deyverdun at Lausanne, in a house

Dear Madam.

I was truly disappointed that you could not admit my visit this spring and still more concerned at the motive of your refusal. Yet I was glad to hear of your indisposition from your own pen; and the firmness of the hand and style gave me the most pleasing assurances of your strength: and I most sincerely hope that your recovery will be completed and established by the return of summer. I am now preparing, by a last visit to Lord and Lady Sheffield, for my departure to the Continent, and I propose being at Lausanne before the end of next month. I feel as I ought your kind anxiety at my leaving England, but ~~I~~ you will not disapprove my chusing the place most agreable to my circumstances and temper, and I need not remind you that all countries are under the care of the same providence.

Letter from Gibbon

Your good wishes and advice will not, I trust, be thrown away on a barren soil; and whatever you may have been told of my opinions, I can assure you with truth, that I consider Religion as the best guide of youth and the best support of old age: that I firmly believe there is less real happiness in the business and pleasures of the World, than in the life, which you have chosen, of devotion and retirement

Lord and Lady Eliot have passed the winter in Cornwall, but I have seen their sons in town. Poor Sir Stanier Porten is still alive, that is all I can say, but his strength decays and his understanding is quite gone. My Lord Sheffield proposes to enclose his letter in the same frank with mine, I shall say nothing of him or his family, and only hope you may be satisfied with the state of your affairs in Sussex.

I am Dear Madam most affectionately Yours

E Gibbon

Sheffield place
June 30th 1788.

overlooking the Lake of Geneva. Here, for four years, immersed in work, "one day glided by another in tranquil uniformity." On the night of the 27th of June 1787 the colossal task was finished, and the last page written of the last volume of the *Decline and Fall.* He took the MS. to England, and the three concluding volumes of the book were published in May 1788. Gibbon rapidly returned to Lausanne, where in a little more than a year he was called upon to part from his companion and lifelong friend, the excellent Deyverdun. Gibbon began to lose pleasure in his beautiful house at Lausanne, and he determined "to fly from poor Deyverdun's shade, which meets me at every turn." He delayed, however, reluctant to move, until the Revolution frightened him away in 1793, after an exile of ten years. He was now much a sufferer from the gout, and grown very inactive in body; this perhaps predisposed him to a variety of disorders, of which dropsy was the most prominent. Yet his final illness was a surprise to those about him, and it is said that but for his own singular neglect of his symptoms it needed by no means to have been fatal. He died in his lodgings in St. James's Street on the 16th of January 1794. His most intimate friend, Lord Sheffield, who had not been able to reach him in time to bid him farewell, undertook the arrangement and publication of Gibbon's papers, and continued during the remainder of his life, with equal judgment and piety, to protect the fame of the historian. Above all, he edited in 1796 the invaluable fragments of an autobiography which Gibbon had left. In middle life the historian became extremely corpulent, and "his mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage." He was the type of the elegant and philosophical hedonist of the eighteenth century, and "sometimes gave the prettiest little dinners in the world." But we think of him mainly in his salon on the terrace at Lausanne, buried for hour after hour in his herculean labour of reconstructing the ancient world from the ruins of its decay.

From "The Decline and Fall."

The eloquence of Claudian has celebrated, with lavish applause, the victory of Pollentia, one of the most glorious days in the life of his patron; but his reluctant and partial muse bestows more genuine praise on the character of the Gothic king. His name is indeed branded with the reproachful epithets of pirate and robber, to which the conquerors of every age are so justly entitled; but the poet of Stilicho is compelled to acknowledge that Alaric possessed the invincible temper of mind, which rises superior to every misfortune, and derives new resources from adversity. After the total defeat of his infantry, he escaped, or rather withdrew, from the field of battle, with the greatest part of his cavalry entire and unbroken. Without wasting a moment to lament the irreparable loss of so many brave companions, he left his victorious enemy to bind in chains the captive images of a Gothic king; and boldly resolved to break through the unguarded passes of the Apennine, to spread desolation over the fruitful face of Tuscany, and to conquer and die before the gates of Rome. The capital was saved by the active and incessant diligence of Stilicho: but he respected the despair of his enemy; and, instead of committing the fate of the republic to the chance of another battle, he proposed to purchase the absence of the Barbarians. The spirit of Alaric would have rejected such terms, the permission of a retreat, and the offer of a pension, with contempt and indignation; but he exercised a limited and precarious authority over the independent chieftains, who had raised him, for *their* service, above the rank of his equals; they were still less disposed to follow an unsuccessful general, and many of them were tempted to consult their interest by a private negotiation with the minister of Honorius.

FROM GIBBON'S "LETTERS."

On the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, I wrote the last lines of the last page [of *The Decline and Fall*] in a summer-house in my garden [at Lausanne]. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy at the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting farewell of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

Philosophy

History, fiction, poetry—these were the three departments in which the literature of the centre of the eighteenth century in England mainly excelled, so far as form was concerned, and of these we have now given a rapid survey. If we consider philosophy, we must revert again to Hume, the leading utilitarian of the age, and as a critic of thought without a rival. It is difficult, however, to give to the philosophical writings of Hume more prominence in such an outline as this than we give to those of Locke, although his merit as a writer on speculative subjects is never quite so negative as Locke's. The limpid grace of his style is apparent even in a production so technical as the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Still less must Hutcheson, Hartley, or Reid detain us, prominent as was the position taken by each of these in the development of philosophical speculation. Philosophy by this time had become detached from *belles lettres;* it was now quite indifferent to those who practised it whether their sentences were harmonious or no. Their sole anxiety was to express what they had to say with the maximum of distinctness. Philosophy, in fact, quitted literature and became a part of science.

Francis Hutcheson
From an Engraving by F. Bartolozzi

It is not often that the lives of the philosophers offer many incidents of a picturesque value to the biographer. Nothing disturbed the quietude of Hutcheson, Hartley, and Reid. **Francis Hutcheson** (1694–1746) was an Irish clergyman and schoolmaster, who was born at Drumalig, County Down, on the 8th of August 1694, and kept school in Ireland until 1724, when he came to reside permanently in Glasgow as Professor of Moral Philosophy in that University. His *Inquiry into the Originals of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* appeared anonymously in 1725; his great *System of*

Moral Philosophy was posthumous (1755). **David Hartley** (1705–1757) was a Yorkshire physician, educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, whose ingenious treatise on vibrations in the brain was published in 1749 as *Observations on Man*. **Thomas Reid** (1710–1796) lived a life no less uneventful; he was a minister of the Scotch Church, who held successive livings in Aberdeenshire, and from 1751 to his death was Professor of Philosophy at the Universities of first Aberdeen and then Glasgow. Reid's most famous book, the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, was published in 1764. In this he attacked Hume, but with so little venom that he submitted the proof-sheets to that philosopher in order to be assured that he was not misrepresenting him.

David Hartley
From an Engraving by William Blake

Nor was theology more amenable than philosophy to the charms of style. The one great man of religious intellect, JOSEPH BUTLER, was wholly devoid of literary curiosity, and austerely disdainful of the manner in which his thoughts were expressed. When his thought is direct, Butler's style is lucid and simple; but when, as is often the case, especially in the *Analogy*, he packs his sentences with labouring complexities of argument, he becomes exceedingly clumsy and hard. Butler stood in complete isolation, as utterly distinct from his contemporaries as Milton had been from his. But if we descend to the commoner ground of theology, we scarcely meet with features more appropriate to our present inquiry. The controversy of Lowth with Warburton was lively, but it was not literature; the sceptics and the Unitarians did not conduct their disquisitions with more elegance than the orthodox clergy; while Paley, whose *Horæ Paulinæ* comes a little later than the close of our present period, seems to mark in its worst form the complete and fatal divorce of eighteenth-century theology from anything like passion or beauty of form. A complete aridity, or else a bombastic sentimentality, is the mark of the prose religious literature of the time. In the hands of Hurd or Hugh Blair we have come far, not merely from the gorgeous style of Fuller and Taylor, but from the academic grace of Tillotson and the noble fulness of Barrow. This decay of theological literature was even more strongly marked in France, where, after the death of Massillon, we meet with no other noticeable name until the nineteenth century opens. It was due, without doubt, to the suspicion of enthusiasm and highly strung religious feeling which was felt throughout Europe in the generations preceding the Revolution.

Theology

Joseph Butler (1692–1752), who was the youngest of the eight children of a substantial woollen-draper of Wantage, was born in a house called the Priory, to which his father had retired from business, on the 18th of May 1692. The family being Presbyterians, Butler was sent to a dissenting school at Gloucester, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. He was trained at this school, which was presently moved to Tewkesbury, with a view to his becoming a Nonconformist minister. At the age of nineteen he entered, incognito, into a theologico-metaphysical correspondence with the eminent Dr. Samuel Clarke. That divine perceived the greatness of mind of his young and unknown correspondent, and later on, in 1716, published the letters of the latter anonymously. Butler became convinced about 1712 that it was his duty to conform to the Established Church, and after some opposition his father gave way, permitting him in 1715 to be entered as a commoner of Oriel College, Oxford. It is not certain when he received ordination, but in December 1718 he was a priest, and, through the recommendation of Clarke, was appointed preacher at the Rolls Court. He had formed friendships in the Talbot family, and in 1722 the bishop of that name presented him with the living of Houghton-le-Skerne in his diocese of Durham, and Butler's friend, Secker, who had also joined the Church of England, presently followed him to Houghton-le-Spring. It was Secker (who had greater aplomb than Butler), who persuaded Bishop Talbot in 1725 to remove their friend to the far more amenable rectory of Stanhope; this enabled Butler to resign the preachership of the Rolls in 1726, on which occasion he published his *Fifteen Sermons*. These gave him at once a leading position among philosophic theologians. For seven years he now lived buried at Stanhope, gradually shaping his great work, *The Analogy of Religion*. It appeared to Secker that his friend was contented with too extreme an obscurity, and when he himself was appointed chaplain to the king, his first thought was for the advancement of Butler; but on speaking to Queen Caroline, her discouraging reply was, "I thought Mr. Butler had been dead." When one of the Talbots was made Lord Chancellor, however, he appointed Butler his chaplain in 1733, and this brought the recluse back to London and to Oxford. The queen now discovered that he was alive, and in 1736 made him her clerk of the closet; but the following year she died. In 1738 Butler was made Vice-Dean of Rochester and Bishop of Bristol. By

Joseph Butler
From an Engraving by Cooper

this time, namely in 1736, the *Analogy* had been published, and had gradually enforced the attention of all thinking persons. The solidity and gravity of the argument, however, failed to provoke much of that controversy in which the eighteenth century was apt to delight; the deists, in particular, were careful to leave Butler alone. In 1740 he was made Dean of St. Paul's, which office he held with Bristol, but resigned his connection with Stanhope and Rochester. His repairs at Bristol were so extensive, that they cost him annually a larger sum than the income of the See, but Butler used to say that "the deanery of St. Paul's paid for them." In 1747 he was offered the Primacy, but refused it, saying, probably in a fit of low spirits, that "it was too late for him to try to support a falling Church." Nor was it without great difficulty that he was persuaded, in July 1750, to allow himself to be translated to Durham, where he did not indeed take full possession till a year later. He bought a mansion at Hampstead, which he made his residence whenever he had to visit London, in which "most enchanting, gay, pretty, elegant house," he dined with Secker, now also a bishop, whenever it was possible to do so. Butler, however, had scarcely settled into his duties at Durham when his health gave way. Early in June 1752 he was carried to Bath, already in a very alarming condition; he was very much troubled by the heat, and the physicians immediately despaired of him. On the 16th of the month he died, and was buried, not at Durham, but in his old cathedral of Bristol. Although he was only sixty when he died, Butler had long borne the appearance of a very aged man. He was divinely placid and venerable; "his white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal." He had an extraordinary gift for awakening and retaining affection, and Secker was but the oldest and the most eminent of a chain of devoted friends. In his younger days he used to gallop around his parish on a black pony, "always riding very fast." He was helpless in the hands of beggars, who would sometimes so cluster about him, as to force him to take shelter in his own rectory. Little else is recorded of the habits of this contemplative, innocent, and saintly man.

From "The Analogy of Religion."

If there are any persons who never set themselves heartily and in earnest to be informed in religion; if there are any who secretly wish it may not prove true, and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them; these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport; if they attend to forms and representations and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified), or if they substitute human errors in the room of divine truth; why may not all or any of these things hinder some men from seeing that evidence which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind with respect to matters of common speculation and practice does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness or from the grosser vices, or whether it be owing to this, that forms and figurative manners of expression as well as errors administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended and the truth itself would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in worldly affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general, levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, do hinder us from being rightly informed with respect to common things; and they may, in like manner, and perhaps in some further providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects, hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is.

William Warburton (1698–1779) was born at Newark on the 24th of December 1698. He was intended to follow his father's profession and be clerk of his native town, but at the age of twenty-five he received holy orders from the Archbishop of York without having enjoyed any college training. He was conscious of his educational deficiencies, and for eighteen years he did hardly anything else but study. In 1741 he became acquainted with Pope, over whose mind Warburton contrived to exercise a curious ascendency. Pope introduced him to the wealthy Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, whose niece Warburton married in 1745. He was now rapidly promoted; in 1757 he was made Dean of Bristol, and in 1759 Bishop of Gloucester.

William Warburton
After the Portrait by Charles Phillips

Warburton, a man of very high ability, was all his life a fighter; controversy was the breath of his nostrils, and he conducted it with unscrupulous vehemence and rancour, but he was a warm and loyal friend. The death of his only son in 1776 paralysed the faculties of Warburton, who lingered in a melancholy condition until June 7, 1779. **Richard Hurd** (1720–1808), the disciple and ally of Warburton, was a man of similar character, no less arrogant, but with less capacity of kindly feeling. He was long Bishop of Worcester, and refused the Primacy. **Dr. Hugh Blair** (1718–1800), once among the most prominent, is now perhaps the most obsolete of English writers. He was the most celebrated pulpit orator of his time, and his lectures and sermons found tens of thousands of admirers. Burns came into amusing collision with the redoubtable vanity

Richard Hurd

of Blair when he was in Edinburgh in 1787. **William Paley** (1743–1805) possessed greater penetration of intellect than any of these; his extremely quiet life was spent in passing from one incumbency to another, closing with the valuable rectory of Bishop-Wearmouth. His famous *Horæ Paulinæ* appeared in 1790. A graphic illustration in his best-known book, the *Evidences of Christianity*, 1792, caused him to be called "Pigeon Paley," an elegant sobriquet which he owed to the wit of King George III. His *Natural Theology* was published in 1802, and set the keystone on the structure of his fame. Paley died at Lincoln on the 25th of May 1805, and was buried in Carlisle Cathedral. The "specious sophist," **Soame Jenyns** (1705–1787), unpleasantly remembered by his clash of arms with Dr. Johnson, had been an earlier author of *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, 1774. In his popular *Inquiry into the Origin of Evil*, 1759, he "ventured far beyond his depth," and Johnson's treatment of it let loose the impertinence of the wits on poor Jenyns, who was a gracious, miscellaneous writer, not without intelligence, and on the whole very harshly dealt with.

William Paley
After the Portrait by George Romney

In one department of letters this period was very rich. Whether they owed it or no to their familiarity with Parisian society and social modes, those strangely assorted friends, Gray and HORACE WALPOLE, exceeded all their English contemporaries in the composition of charmingly picturesque familiar letters. Less spontaneous, but of an extreme elegance and distinction, were the letters addressed by the fourth Earl of CHESTERFIELD to

Soame Jenyns
After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

The Letter Writers

his natural son, a correspondence long considered to be the final "protocol" of good breeding in deportment. Of a totally different character were the caustic political invectives issued in the form of correspondence, and under the pseudonym of JUNIUS, between 1769 and 1772; but these were letters which gave no pleasure to the recipients, and the form of which precluded all reply. It is, perhaps, not fair to include Junius among the letter-writers, but the correspondence of Chesterfield, Walpole, and Gray will certainly bear comparison with the best in the same class which was produced in France

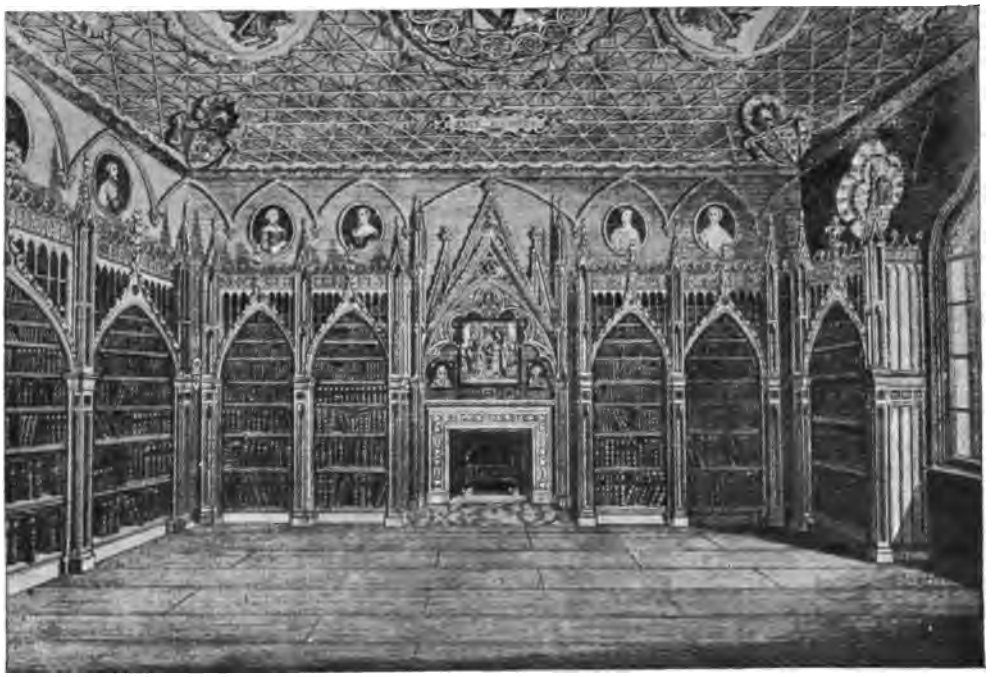
View of Strawberry Hill

From "A Description of the Villa of Mr. H. W.," 1784

during the eighteenth century. Walpole, in particular, excels all the French in the peculiarly Gallic combination of wit, mundane observation, and picturesque, easy detail.

Horace Walpole (1717–1797), who died fourth Earl of Orford, was the third son of Sir Robert Walpole of Houghton, the famous Prime Minister. He was born in Arlington Street on the 24th of September 1717. He went to Eton in April 1727, and was a refined and fastidious schoolboy of a type not at that time familiar. Among his earliest friends were the Montagus, Gray, and Richard West. In March 1735 Walpole passed to King's College, Cambridge. In 1737 his mother, Lady Walpole, died, and he was appointed by his father to a post in the Custom House. He exchanged for or added to this other appointments, and, in short, after this time was never again a charge to his family. He did not quit Cambridge, however, until 1739, when he started with Gray on the foreign tour which has already been described in our account of that poet. After Gray left him in May 1741 Horace Walpole fell ill of a quinsy at Reggio, and would have died but for the devotion of Joseph Spence, the antiquary

(1698–1768). When he had recovered he went on to Venice, and then by sea, and through France, to England. During his absence he had been elected M.P. for Callington; a few months later his father was defeated, and resigned, being created Earl of Orford. The whole family retired to Houghton, but the great fallen statesman only survived until 1745; he left his son Horace a decent fortune and his famous house in Arlington Street. In August 1746 Horace Walpole took an apartment within the precincts of Windsor Castle, and began to entertain there; but it did not quite suit him, and, a year later, he bought "a little new farm, just out of Twickenham," from Mrs. Chenevix, the toy-woman. It was itself a toy, "set in enamelled meadows, with



Walpole's Library at Strawberry Hill

From "A Description of the Villa of Mr. H. W.," 1784

filigree hedges," and its name was Strawberry Hill. He called it "new," but it was about fifty years old, and it simply served as the nucleus for a little Gothic castle. Walpole amused himself by wholly rebuilding it, and the last addition, "the great north bedchamber," was not finished until 1770. This fantastic mansion was the joy and occupation of Walpole's whole life. In 1754 he was elected M.P. for Castle Rising, and in 1757 for King's Lynn, both Norfolk boroughs in the family interest, but he took little or no continuous part in politics. He had always dabbled in letters, and his correspondence remains to prove to us how admirably he had written in easy prose since childhood; but Horace Walpole's authorship began with the trifling satire, *A Letter from Xo Ho*, 1757. In this same year he set up at Strawberry Hill his celebrated printing press, his *officina arbuteana;* the first offspring of which was Gray's *Odes*. In 1758 Walpole printed his *Royal and Noble Authors of England*, which was "marvellously in fashion," to his great astonishment; and he collected his *Fugitive*

Tuesday aug. 16th
1796.

Tho I this morning received yr Sunday's full Letter, it is three o'clock before I have a moment to begin answering it, it must do it myself, for Kirgate is not at home. First came in Mr Barrett, then Conway, who has been for some days at Mr Udney's with his Wife; She so afflicted for her only little Girl, that she shut herself up in her chamber, would not be seen — the man Conway does not seem to think that much of the Loss belonged to him: he romanced with his usual vivacity. Next arrived Dr Burney, on his way to Mrs Boscawen. He asked me about deplorable Camilla — Alas! I had not recovered of it enough to be loud in its praise. I am glad however to hear that she has realized about 2000£ — and the worth (no doubt) of as much in honour at Windsor, where she was dining three days, & where even Mon Barbelay was allowed to dine.

I rejoice at your Bathing promising so well. If the beautiful Brighthelmston dips too, the Waves will be still more salutary —

(H) Venus Orta mari mare prostat eunti.

I like your going to survey Castles & Towers; it is who comes nearer drawing by writing pages of Letters — which you see I cannot do —

Wednesday, after Breakfast. When I came home from Lady Mendip's last night, I attempted to finish This myself, but my poor Fingers were so hired by all the Work of the Day, that it will require Sir W. Jones's Gift of Tongues to interpret my Pothooks: one would think Arabic Characters were catching for Agnes had shewn me a Volume of their Poems finely printed at Cashbridge, with a Version, which Mr Douglas had lent to her, and said were very simple, and not in the inflated Stile of the East — You shall judge — in the first page I opened, I found a storm of Lightning that had burst into a horse laugh — I resume the Thread of my Letter. You had not examined Arundel Castle enough, for You do not mention the noble —

Extract from a Letter of Walpole's

Pieces in Verse and Prose. His more important work, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, came from the Strawberry Press in 1762–63; his romance, *The Castle of Otranto*, was published in 1764. He now gave his pen and his press a rest, and went in 1765 to Paris and Versailles, where he was presented to the French royal family, of whom he has preserved a most entertaining account. Paris he thought "the ugliest, beastliest town in the universe," although its society welcomed and caressed him. He met Madame du Deffand, whom he called at first "an old blind debauchee of wit," but with whom he presently struck up what became a lifelong and devoted friendship. After his return from this somewhat momentous visit to France, Walpole continued to produce publications, the most ambitious of which belong to the same weeks of the early spring of 1768, the paradoxical white-washing of Richard III., called *The Historic Doubts*, and the grim tragedy of *The Mysterious Mother*. He was henceforth more and more occupied with the mundane duties of entertaining at Strawberry Hill, and of holding elaborate and witty correspondence with his friends. In 1779 he left the historic house where he was born in Arlington Street, and took one, after a tedious suit in Chancery, in Berkeley Square; in 1780 he lost, at the age of eighty-four, his lively old friend, Madame du Deffand. Her place was in a measure taken by two delightful young women, Mary and Agnes Berry—"my two Straw Berries"—whom he prevailed upon, some years later, to come and live at Cliveden. In 1792 Horace Walpole underwent what he called "the empty metamorphosis" of succeeding his nephew as Earl of Orford. He still continued to entertain the world; when he was seventy-eight Queen Charlotte was his guest. He died in Berkeley Square on the 2nd of March 1797, and was buried at Houghton. Horace Walpole was the ideal of a *petit maître* in manner; "he always entered a room in a style of affected delicacy, *chapeau bras* between his hands, knees bent and feet on tiptoe." He usually dressed in lavender, with partridge silk stockings and gold buckles, and with lace ruffles and frill. He was more interesting to his own generation as a virtuoso than in any other capacity; to ours he is the type of the eighteenth-century exquisite person of quality, and the most animated letter-writer of an age which positively lives again in his admirably vivacious correspondence. Horace Walpole is far from being the most lovable, or the most thoughtful, or the most pathetic, but he is easily the wittiest and most graphic of English letter-writers, and the sixty-years' chronicle of his familiar epistles forms his main and immortal work.

Horace Walpole

After the Portrait by Nathaniel Hone

WALPOLE'S ACCOUNT OF LORD BALMERINO'S EXECUTION.

The scaffold was immediately new-strewed with sawdust, the block new-covered, the executioner new-dressed, and a new axe brought. Then came old Balmerino, treading with the air of a general. As soon as he mounted the scaffold, he read the inscription on his coffin, as he did again afterwards: he then surveyed the spectators, who were in amazing numbers, even upon masts upon ships in the river; and pulling out his spectacles,

read a treasonable speech, which he delivered to the Sheriff, and said, the young Pretender was so sweet a Prince, that flesh and blood could not resist following him; and lying down to try the block, he said, "If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause!" He said if he had not taken the sacrament the day before, he would have knocked down Williamson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, for his ill-usage of him. He took the axe and felt it, and asked the headsman how many blows he had given Lord Kilmarnock; and gave him three guineas. Two clergymen, who attended him, coming up, he said, "No, gentlemen; I believe you have already done me all the service you can." Then he went to the corner of the scaffold, and called very loud for the warden to give him his periwig, which he took off, and put on a night-cap of Scotch plaid, and then pulled off his coat and waistcoat and lay down; but being told he was on the wrong side, vaulted round, and immediately gave the sign by tossing up his arm, as if he were giving the signal for battle. He received three blows, but the first certainly took away all sensation. He was not a quarter of an hour on the scaffold; Lord Kilmarnock above half a one. Balmerino certainly died with the intrepidity of a hero, but the insensibility of one too. As he walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and top of house filled with spectators. he cried out, "Look, look. how they are all piled up like rotten oranges!"

Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of **Chesterfield** (1694–1773), was born in London on the 22nd of September 1694. He was the son of the third Earl, and his mother, Lady Elizabeth Savile, was the daughter of the Marquis of Halifax, who wrote the admirable essays. The main part of the career of Chesterfield belongs to politics. He entered the House of Commons in 1715, and spoke there six weeks before he was of age, thus rendering himself liable to a heavy fine. This was the beginning of a parliamentary career which lasted for forty years. In 1745–46 Chesterfield was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and greatly distinguished himself by the breadth of his policy. He had succeeded to the earldom in 1726, and was now offered a dukedom, which he refused. Chesterfield in his retirement cultivated the art of manners in its most exquisite degree, and his last words — "Give Dayrolles a chair"—show that he was polite to the final moment of his life. He died at Chesterfield House, South Audley Street, on the 24th of March 1773. During his lifetime,

Lord Chesterfield

After the Portrait by William Hoare

although a patron of letters, Chesterfield published nothing but two or three political tracts. But immediately after his death was issued by his widow Melusina von Scheulenburg, a collection of the Letters which he had written to his natural son, the child of a certain Madame du Bouchet; in this Philip Stanhope (1732–1768), whom he had made his heir, Chesterfield's hopes and ambitions were concentred. The Letters had been written as a guide to the lad in principles, in deportment, and in sentiment. Chesterfield knew that his son was weak and vague; he had a passionate desire to strengthen and direct him in what he intended should be the business of his life, "Negotiation abroad, and Oratory in the House of Commons at home." But the young Stanhope "was not calculated to shine"; his whole course, culminating in his early death, was a cruel disillusion for his father. The *Letters* of 1774 enjoyed a prodigious success, and are still a kind of classic. The politeness of Chesterfield was proverbial, but he contrived—probably through no fault of his own, but through the carelessness of a servant—to infuriate Johnson. Even by this witness, however, it is admitted that the manners of Chesterfield were exquisitely elegant.

FROM CHESTERFIELD'S "LETTERS."

Good manners are to particular societies what good morals are to society in general,—their cement and their security. And as laws are enacted to enforce good morals, or at least to prevent the ill effects of bad ones, so there are certain rules of civility, universally implied and received, to enforce good manners and punish bad ones. And indeed there seems to me to be less difference both between the crimes and punishments than at first one would imagine. The immoral man, who invades another's property, is justly hanged for it; and the ill-bred man, who by his ill-manners invades and disturbs the quiet and comforts of private life, is by common consent as justly banished society. Mutual complaisances, attentions, and sacrifices of little conveniences, are as natural an implied compact between civilised people as protection and obedience are between kings and subjects; whoever, in either case, violates that compact, justly forfeits all advantages arising from it. For my own part, I really think that, next to the consciousness of doing a good action, that of doing a civil one is the most pleasing; and the epithet which I should covet the most, next to that of Aristides, would be that of well-bred.

The series of polemical letters which appeared in *The Public Advertiser* under the pseudonym of JUNIUS produced a sensation which has never been paralleled in English political life and literature. The first of these epistles was printed on the 21st of January 1769, the last precisely three years later. Junius attacked the Government of the Duke of Grafton, which included Mansfield, North, and Granby, and his main point at first was their failure to support Wilkes, that champion of the democracy. The author of these letters remained throughout unknown, even to the publisher of the newspaper which printed them; although every effort was made to discover him, he was able to boast "I am the sole depositary of my secret, and it shall die with me." It was after these scandalous and brilliant diatribes had appeared at intervals for nearly a year, and when public curiosity was at its height, that Junius raised a perfect fury of sensation by attacking the King himself. Nobody now felt safe; as Burke said, "Kings, lords, and commons are but the sport of his fury." It is generally admitted that the style of Junius was superior to his principles; he posed as a sort of Radical, but was in favour of taxing the colonies; he did not disdain to retail private scandal, and his magnificent invection often betrays

a callous indifference to veracity. On the other hand, of the patriotism of Junius there can be as little question as of his courage. His letter to the King displays the former no less than his terrible philippics against the Dukes of Bedford and Grafton the latter. The correspondence of Junius ceased abruptly, but Woodfall, the editor of *The Public Advertiser*, reprinted the letters in two volumes in 1772. Extraordinary exertions have been made, but made in vain, to discover the name and rank of Junius. Nearly forty persons have been from time to time suggested, including Lord George Sackville (1716–1785), Horne Tooke (1736–1812), and the second Earl Temple (1711–1779). The greatest favourite of conjecture during the nineteenth century was Sir Philip Francis (1740–1818). But nothing is decided, nothing known; and, after a hundred and thirty years, we have advanced no further than Lord North had when he said, "The great boar of the wood, this mighty Junius, has broken through the toils and foiled the hunters."

Edmund Burke
After a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

FROM THE LETTER OF JUNIUS TO THE KING (December 19, 1769).

SIR,—It is the misfortune of your life, and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has ever attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth till you heard it in the complaints of your people. It is not, however, too late to correct the error of your education. We are still inclined to make an indulgent allowance for the pernicious lessons you received in your youth, and to form the most sanguine hopes from the natural benevolence of your disposition. We are far from thinking you capable of a direct deliberate purpose to invade those original rights of your subjects on which all the civil and political liberties depend. Had it been possible for us to entertain a suspicion so dishonourable to your character, we should long since have adopted a style of remonstrance very distant from the humility of complaint. The doctrine inculcated by our laws, "that the king can do no wrong," is admitted without reluctance. We separate the amiable good-natured prince from the folly and treachery of his servants, and the private virtues of the man from the vices of his government. Were it not for this just distinction, I know not whether your majesty's condition, or that of the English nation, would deserve most to be lamented. I would prepare your mind for a favourable reception of truth, by removing every painful offensive

Sat. noon

Dr. Jem,

I am perfectly convinced how unpleasant it must be to you to write me such a letter as I have just received containing so extraordinary & ridiculous a statement from the Barbers - I assure you that is the first communication of the kind I have had - you will undoubtedly expect to give the security to the old Trustees & if He does not come one must be found that will. as to the executions, they ought long since to have been withdrawn in good faith: The settling an intricate account with a Pistol at one's breast is not a pleasant way of doing business, nor I should think a satisfactory manner of learning strangers admitted. everything else on our part has been arranged now. Don't be alarmed - I merely pay necessary attention to the Theatre and Widely; avocations have prevented those which formerly naturally the most engaged my attention - I would be very much engaged only I will do myself the pleasure of calling on you in the course of the Day:

R B Sheridan

Letter from Sheridan

idea of personal reproach. Your subjects, sir, wish for nothing but that, as *they* are reasonable and affectionate enough to separate your person from your government, so *you*, in your turn, would distinguish between the conduct which becomes the permanent dignity of a king, and that which serves only to promote the temporary interest and miserable ambition of a minister.

You ascended the throne with a declared—and, I doubt not, a sincere—resolution of giving universal satisfaction to your subjects. You found them pleased with the novelty of a young prince, whose countenance promised even more than his words, and loyal to you not only from principle but passion. It was not a cold profession of allegiance to the first magistrate, but a partial, animated attachment to a favourite prince, the native of their country. They did not wait to examine your conduct, nor to be determined by experience, but gave you a generous credit for the future blessings of your reign, and paid you in advance the dearest tribute of their affections. Such, sir, was once the disposition of a people who now surround your throne with reproaches and complaints. Do justice to yourself. Banish from your mind those unworthy opinions with which some interested persons have laboured to possess you. Distrust the men who tell you that the English are naturally light and inconstant; that they complain without a cause. Withdraw your confidence equally from all parties; from ministers, favourites, and relations; and let there be one moment in your life in which you have consulted your own understanding.

The drama enjoyed some revival in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when several practised writers for the boards went back to the tradition of Congreve and Farquhar, taking care to avoid the scandalous indecencies of the close of the Dryden period. Of the comedies of these writers, of whom Colman and Cumberland were the most abundant, those of Goldsmith and of SHERIDAN were the best and the most literary, and these have permanently held the stage.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan
After the Crayon Drawing by John Russell

Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751–1816) was the third of the children of Thomas Sheridan the actor (Johnson's "Sherry, naturally dull") and of his wife, Frances Chamberlaine (1724–1766), the novelist and playwright. He was born in Dublin on the 30th of October 1751; he attended a school in Dublin from the age of seven till eight and a half, and then rejoined his parents in London. His brilliant mother was his first real instructor, and pronounced him "an impenetrable dunce"; in 1762 he was sent with his elder brother to Harrow. Here their parents

left the boys when, becoming bankrupt, they had to retire to France; when they reached Blois Mrs. Sheridan died, too early to have divined her Richard's talent. At Harrow the latter failed to distinguish himself. Soon after leaving school Sheridan eloped to Dunkirk with a supposed heiress and very beautiful singer, Miss Elizabeth Linley, to whom he was clandestinely married at Calais. The couple returned to England, and poverty obliged them to separate; but a tremendous duel in which Sheridan was engaged made so great a stir that the secret was discovered. In April 1773 the couple were publicly married again; young Mrs. Sheridan is understood to have been the model for Lydia Languish. In the winter of 1774 they settled in a costly house in Orchard Street, and Sheridan began to be a successful dramatist. *The Rivals*, *St. Patrick's Day*, and *The Duenna* were all first performed in 1775, *The Trip to Scarborough* and *The School for Scandal* in 1777, and *The Critic* in 1779. With this admirable farce, and at the age of only twenty-eight, Sheridan practically closed his career as a man of letters. Next year he entered Parliament as member for Stafford, and threw himself warmly into the troubled political life of those days, when the American War was passing to its inevitable conclusion. Sheridan's public career, and even his experiences as manager of Drury Lane Theatre, which was rebuilt in 1792 and reopened in 1794 under his auspices, scarcely belong to the history of literature, nor does the celebrated part he took in the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1787–88. Mrs. Sheridan having died in 1792, Sheridan married a foolish girl in her teens, Miss Esther Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester, with a small fortune. Sheridan's prospects darkened as he advanced in years, although he enjoyed bursts of brilliant prosperity. In 1809 the destruction of Drury Lane by fire was a terrible blow to him. The close of his life was made wretched by desperate financial subterfuges, and by the results of "oceans of port wine." He died, overwhelmed with debts, in his London house on the 7th of July 1816, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

THE
CRITIC
OR
A Tragedy Rehearsed
A
Dramatic Piece
in three ACTS
as it is performed at the
THEATRE ROYAL in DRURY LANE
By
Richard Brinsley Sheridan Esqr.
LONDON.
Printed for T. Becket, Adelphi. Strand.
MDCCLXXXI.

Title-page of First Edition of Sheridan's "Critic"

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

FROM "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

Sneer. That attack, now, on you the other day——

Sir Fretful Plagiary. What? Where?

Dangle. Ay! you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natured to be sure.

Sir F. Oh! so much the better; ha, ha, ha! I wouldn't have it otherwise. Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever, though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir F. Ha, ha, ha! very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your commonplace-book, where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the Lost and Stolen Office.

Sir F. Ha, ha, ha! very pleasant.

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to *steal* with taste; but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments, like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir F. Ha, ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable if the thoughts were ever suited to the expressions; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic incumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms.

Sir F. Ha, ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-woolsey; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir F. Ha!——

Sneer. In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating, so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilise.

Sir F. [*After great agitation.*] Now, another person would be vexed at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you, only to divert you.

Sir F. I know it. I *am* diverted—ha, ha, ha! not the least invention! ha, ha, ha!—very good, very good!

Sneer. Yes; no genius! ha, ha, ha!

Dangle. A severe rogue, ha, ha, ha!—but you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir F. To be sure; for if there is anything to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it; and if it is abuse, why, one is always sure to hear of it from some damned good-natured friend or other!

Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), whose sensitiveness to criticism was ridiculed in the person of Sir Fretful Plagiary, was the versatile author of between fifty and sixty plays. He was born on the 19th of February 1732 under the roof of his maternal grandfather, the famous Dr. Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. His father was Dr. Denison Cumberland, Bishop of Kilmore; his mother Joanna Bentley, the "Phœbe" of Byron's celebrated pastoral. Perhaps the most successful of Cumberland's plays was *The West Indian*, 1771. He was connected for many years with the Board of Trade, of which he rose to be Secretary. He died at Tunbridge Wells, May 7, 1811, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. **George Colman the Elder**

(1733–1794), was the author of thirty-five pieces, almost entirely comic; of these *The Jealous Wife*, 1761, and *The Clandestine Marriage*, 1766, had great merit. His son, **George Colman the Younger** (1762–1836), was a highly successful writer of farces, squibs, and musical comedies, of which *Inkle and Yarico* was long the popular type.

Richard Cumberland
After the Portrait by George Romney

We have spoken of the dawn of a revived romanticism in poetry. The signs of it were not less obvious in the prose of this period. Gray, with his fervent love of mountain scenery and recognition of the true sublime, is at the head of the naturalists. But great praise is due to the topographical writers who more and more drew attention to the forms of natural landscape. The observations of Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Gilbert White, although made towards the close of the period we are examining, were not published until much later. Gilpin, in particular, is a pathetic instance of a man full of appreciation of natural beauty, prevented by the tradition of his time from expressing it; sensible of the charm of the visible world, yet tongue-tied and bound by sterile habits of repression. After the seal of a hundred years had been set on the eyes and mouths of men, it was not suddenly or without a struggle that they could welcome and respond to a revived consciousness of the loveliness of wild scenery.

George Colman the Elder
After the Portrait by Thomas Gainsborough

The extravagances of the formal landscape-gardeners awakened a protest from **Sir Uvedale Price** (1747–1829), who had inherited a large fortune in 1761, and set himself to lay out his estate at Foxley in Herefordshire. He put forth the views which had actuated him in the famous *Essay on the Picturesque*, which first appeared in 1794. He was in favour of letting nature have her way, and of

refraining from all "improvement" of scenery. He lived to see himself congratulated by Sir Walter Scott on having "converted the age" to his opinions. Uvedale Price was also a translator and commentator of Pausanias, and the very type of an elegant country gentleman of the old school. **William Gilpin** (1724–1804) was a Cumberland clergyman engaged in teaching. He was in the habit of taking extended summer tours, and of noting what he saw with pen and pencil. He wrote as an enthusiast, and was one of the pioneers of picturesque descriptive writing. His volumes on the *Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1789) undoubtedly prepared the way for the romantic school of poets. The publications of Gilpin were extremely numerous and varied in theme, but only those dedicated to picturesque travel could be said to survive him.

THE
NATURAL HISTORY
OF
SELBORNE.
Homeri Odyss.

Title-page of the First Edition of the "Natural History of Selborne"

Gilbert White (1720–1793), the scion of a respectable clerical family, was the son of John White and his wife Anne Holt, and was born on the 18th of July 1720, at Selborne in Hants, of which parish his grandfather, Gilbert White, was vicar. He was educated under the poet, Thomas Warton the elder, at Basingstoke, and in 1739 proceeded to Oriel College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1743, and in 1744 was elected a Fellow. In 1747 White was admitted into holy orders by Bishop Secker. He became curate to his uncle Charles White at Swarraton, and in 1751 to his grandfather's successor at Selborne itself. Gilbert White did not, however, finally settle in the village which he has made so illustrious until 1755. A plurality of sinecure college-livings were offered to him; he accepted only one, the vicarage of Moreton-Pinkney in Northamptonshire, which he held from 1757 to his death. As soon as he had made his home at Selborne, he began to study its natural history, and to correspond with some of the most eminent scientists of the day, particularly with Banks, Daines Barrington, and Pennant; he greatly helped the last-mentioned in the composition of his once-famous *British Zoology*, although Pennant had not the grace to make any public acknowledgment of his debt. Barrington also used copious data supplied to him by Gilbert White, but always with adequate recognition. It was Barrington who, in 1770, first suggested to White that

he should "draw up an account of the animals of the neighbourhood" of Selborne. But progress was slow. In 1774 White is still collecting in journals the materials for an *annus historico-naturalis;* in 1780 he is arranging his notes; early in 1788 he is transcribing for the press. The celebrated work, so long preparing, was given at length to the public in 1789, as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, and took its place at once as the most popular book of its class in English. White was now an elderly man, and the completion of his lifelong labour seems to have left him without any object for his energy. His kind, hospitable, and charitable career came to a noiseless end at Selborne on the 26th of June 1793. He would never sit for his portrait, but we are told that he was a little, spare man, of a remarkably upright carriage.

View of Selborne Church

FROM "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE."

The evening proceedings and manœuvres of the rooks are curious and amusing in the autumn. Just before dusk they return in long strings from the foraging of the day, and

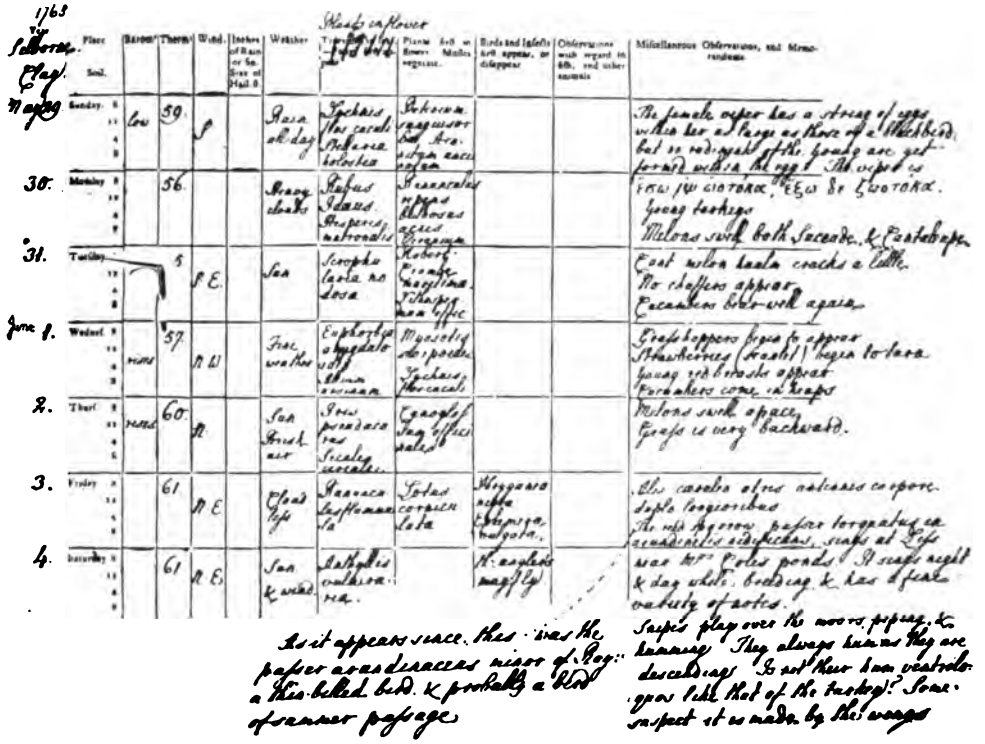
View of the Plestor, from the "Natural History of Selborne," 1789

rendezvous by thousands over Selborne down, where they wheel round in the air and sport and dive in a playful manner, all the while exerting their voices, and making a loud cawing, which, being blended and softened by the distance that we at the village are below them,

becomes a confused noise or chiding ; or rather a pleasing murmur, very engaging to the imagination, and not unlike the cry of a pack of hounds in hollow, echoing woods, or the rushing of the wind in tall trees, or the tumbling of the tide upon a pebbly shore. When this ceremony is over, with the last gleam of day, they retire for the night to the deep beechen woods of Tisted and Ropley. We remember a little girl who, as she was going to bed, used to remark on such an occurrence, in the true spirit of physico-theology, that the rooks were saying their prayers ; and yet this child was much too young to be aware that the Scriptures have said of the Deity—that "He feedeth the ravens who call upon Him."

White Owls.

We have had ever since I can remember, a pair of white owls that constantly breed under the eaves of this church. As I have paid good attention to the manner of life of



A Page from the "Naturalist's Journal," with Autograph Notes by Gilbert White

these birds during their season of breeding, which lasts the summer through, the following remarks may not perhaps be unacceptable :—About an hour before sunset (for then the mice begin to run) they sally forth in quest of prey, and hunt all round the hedges of meadows and small enclosures for them, which seem to be their only food. In this irregular country we can stand on an eminence and see them beat the fields over like a setting-dog, and often drop in the grass or corn. I have minuted these birds with my watch for an hour together, and have found that they return to their nest, the one or other of them, about once in five minutes ; reflecting at the same time on the adroitness that every animal is possessed of as far as regards the well-being of itself and offspring. But a piece of address, which they show when they return loaded, should not, I think, be passed over in silence.—As they take their prey with their claws, so they carry it in their claws to their nest ; but, as the feet are necessary in their ascent under the tiles, they

constantly perch first on the roof of the chancel, and shift the mouse from their claws to their bill, that their feet may be at liberty to take hold of the plate on the wall as they are rising under the eaves.

White owls seem not (but in this I am not positive) to hoot at all; all that clamorous hooting appears to me to come from the wood kinds. The white owl does, indeed, snore and hiss in a tremendous manner; and these menaces well answer the intention of intimidating; for I have known a whole village up in arms on such an occasion, imagining the churchyard to be full of goblins and spectres. White owls also often scream horribly as they fly along; from this screaming probably arose the common people's imaginary species of screech-owl, which they superstitiously think attends the windows of dying persons. The plumage of the remiges of the wings of every species of owl that I have yet examined is remarkably soft and pliant. Perhaps it may be necessary that the wings of these birds should not make much resistance or rushing, that they may be enabled to steal through the air unheard upon a nimble and watchful quarry.

While I am talking of owls, it may not be improper to mention what I was told by a gentleman of the county of Wilts. As they were grubbing a vast hollow pollard-ash that had been the mansion of owls for centuries, he discovered at the bottom a mass of matter that at first he could not account for. After some examination he found that it was a congeries of the bones of mice (and perhaps of birds and bats) that had been heaping together for ages, being cast up in pellets out of the crops of many generations of inhabitants. For owls cast up the bones, fur, and feathers of what they devour, after the manner of hawks. He believes, he told me, that there were bushels of this kind of substance.

The art-criticism of the eighteenth century, which was in the main both pedantic and empirical, culminated in England in the *Discourses* of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, in which a very great painter translated into the old professional formulas genuine impressions of beauty and a broad practical experience of æsthetics. Before his time persons who might or might not have ever seen a picture painted theorised about the principles of art in a vacuum; Reynolds was a superb painter first, and then a lecturer on the technique of the profession he practised. As a writer he has been accused of lacking animation and lucidity, and this is partly or occasionally true. But he has the ease of a man who knows what he is talking about, and a suavity and fulness characteristic of his charming social presence. His *Discourses*, which were listened to by all that was promising in the younger generation of painters and sculptors from Flaxman to Turner, exercised an immense influence on taste, and may still be read with instruction and pleasure.

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) was the son of a clergyman and schoolmaster at Plympton East, in South Devon, where he was born on the 16th of July 1723. He was educated at his father's grammar-school, with a view to his becoming a doctor, but his bias towards design was irresistible. In 1741 he was placed under Hudson, the portrait painter, with whom he worked for two years. In 1744 Reynolds started, first in London, then in Plymouth, painting cheap portraits for a livelihood. At the close of 1749 he sailed for Italy, where he remained until 1752, when he settled in London for the remainder of his life. Of the magnificent career of Reynolds as an artist this is not the place to speak. His intellectual life was greatly stimulated by his friendship with Johnson, which dated from about 1754; ten years later the lexicographer wrote to the painter, "If I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call

a friend;" this delightful companionship lasted unbroken till the death of Johnson. It was probably through Johnson that Reynolds gradually became intimate with Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Percy. In their company he grew accustomed to intellectual exercises and to a witty turn of language such as no other artists of that day were proficient in or comprehended.

When, in December 1768, the Royal Academy was founded, Reynolds was elected the first president by a unanimous vote, not merely because of his supremacy as a painter, but because his elegant delivery and urbane ease of manners recommended him as a perfect representative of his order. He delivered his first lecture to the students on the 2nd of January 1769, and repeated them annually. Each was anonymously published in quarto form, immediately after its delivery, and in 1778 the first seven were reprinted in an octavo volume. Their successors were biennial, and were not reprinted until after the death of the great President. As we now possess them, the *Discourses* are fifteen in number. Reynolds died in his house in Leicester Fields, after a painfully depressing illness, on the 23rd of February 1792, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

After a Portrait by himself

FROM "THE TENTH DISCOURSE" (December 11, 1780).

Sculpture is an art of much more simplicity and uniformity than painting; it cannot with propriety, and the best effect, be applied to many subjects. The object of its pursuit may be comprised in two words, Form and Character; and those qualities are presented to us but in one manner, or in one style only; whereas the powers of Painting, as they are more various and extensive, so they are exhibited in a great variety of manners. The Roman, Lombard, Florentine, Venetian, and Flemish Schools, all pursue the same end by different means. But Sculpture, having but one style, can only to one style of Painting have any relation; and to this, which is indeed the highest and most dignified that Painting can boast, it has a relation so close, that it may be said to be almost the same art operating upon different materials. The sculptors of the last age, from not attending sufficiently to this discrimination of the different styles of painting, have been led into many errors. Though they well knew that they were allowed to imitate, or take ideas for the improvement of their own art from the grand style of painting, they were not permitted to borrow in the same manner from the ornamental. When they endeavour to copy the

picturesque effects, contrasts, or petty excellencies of whatever kind, which not improperly find a place in the inferior branches of painting, they doubtless imagine themselves improving and extending the boundaries of their art by this imitation; but they are in reality violating its essential characters, by giving a different direction to its operations, and proposing to themselves either what is unattainable, or at best a meaner object of pursuit. The grave and austere character of sculpture requires the utmost degree of formality in composition; picturesque contrasts have here no place; everything is carefully weighed and measured, one side making almost an exact equipoise to the other: a child is not a proper balance to a full-grown figure, nor is a figure sitting or stooping a companion to an upright figure.

The central portion of the eighteenth century marks a progress in the democratisation of literature. The love of books and the habit of reading spread rapidly and widely through all parts of the country and all ranks of society. The world of letters was no longer, as it had been in the age of Anne, a small circle of sub-aristocratic bourgeois who wrote for one another and for the polite toilets of London. The capital was no longer remarkable for the importance of its literary representatives; the life of letters was in the provinces, was almost cosmopolitan. English literature now, for the first time, became European, and in order to obtain that distinction, it was forced more and more to cast aside its original characteristics and to relinquish its insularity. That it did so with effect is proved by the very interesting fact that, while up to this date we have seen England either solitary or affected by Italy or France without the knowledge of those powers, we find it now suddenly producing the most powerfully radiating literature in Europe, and forming the taste of Germany, France, and the world. The final actor in the work of fusing the Saxon and the Latin literatures in one general style was Rousseau, who combined, as Mme. de Staël noted, the taste and habits of France with the ideas and sentiments of the North.

The freedom and rough simplicity of English life, its energy, its cultivation of truth and sincerity—qualities, no doubt, viewed by the Continental Anglomaniacs under too rosy a light, but still, in outline, recognisably national — these were what fascinated, in their different ways, Voltaire, Prévost, Diderot, and above all Rousseau. Conducted by these enthusiasts, the literature of barbarous England was received with open arms in all the academies and salons of Europe, and a new literature was everywhere stimulated into existence by the rivalry of such Englishmen as Young, Richardson, and Hume. On the other hand, it is impossible to overlook the influence of Montesquieu on such English minds as those of Gray, Gibbon, and Adam Ferguson; and the Scotch writers, in particular, consciously gallicised their style, in the pursuit of that elegant plausibility which they found so charming in French models. These reverberations of taste aided one another, and increased the facility with which English and Continental readers acquainted themselves mutually with the rival literature. But this marks a condition of things hitherto unparalleled, and we may roughly give the year 1750 as the date at which the wall which had from the earliest times

surrounded and concealed our intellectual products, began to crumble down and expose us to the half-admiring, half-scornful gaze of Europe.

This communion with exotic forms of intelligence, and the renewed sympathy for antique and romantic forms of thought and expression, tended, no doubt, to prepare our literature for the revolution which was coming. But even so late as 1780 there were few signs of change. Individual men of genius forced the language to say, for them and through them, things which had not been said before, but the pedagogic shackles were practically unloosened. It was in the insidious forms of "sensibility," as it was called, the new species of tender and self-satisfying pity, that the rigid rules of life were being most directly broken. This warm stream of sentiment, amounting at times to something like enthusiasm, tended to melt the horny or stony crust which the recognised conditions of thought had spread over every kind of literature. Grace, eloquence, intellectual curiosity, dignity — all these were still possible under the hard formular régime; but the more spiritual movements of the mind — lyrical passion, daring speculation, real sublimity, splendid caprice — were quite impossible within a space so cramped, and were, as a matter of fact, scarcely attempted.

When we consider, then, how unfavourable the conditions were in which literature was confined during the central years of the eighteenth century, we may marvel, not at the poverty, but at the richness of the actual product. If the creation of the novel was the greatest triumph of the age, it was not its only one. These years brought forth a number of men whose intellectual vitality was so commanding, that it negatived the sterile qualities of the soil from which they sprang. If Butler, Gibbon, Johnson, and Gray had been born in an age which aided instead of retarding the flow of their ideas, their periods might have been fuller, their ornament more splendid. But so intense was their individuality, so definite their sense of what their gift was to the age, that they overcame their disabilities, and produced work which we, regarding it with deep sympathy and respect, cannot conceive being cast in a form more pertinent or more characteristic. And it is a sentimental error to suppose that the winds of God blow only through the green tree; it is sometimes the dry tree which is peculiarly favourable to their passage.

END OF VOLUME III

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